

# Ferro News

June 1998

Quarterly Newsletter for Ferrocement Boat Owners

Issue 7

**W**elcome Back! Its that time again! **Time to renew your subscription for Ferro News for the next 4 issues in 98/99.** Thanks to all of you that have already sent in renewals and to those that subscribed for 2 years at last year's subscription. Don't hesitate to phone or write if you think I've left you out and I shouldn't have - the administrative process is a little wanting at the FN headquarters. Please remember that if you subscribe during the year, back copies are sent so that everyone is due in June of each year. As a reminder I have included the renewal year on the envelope address label, so if it reads Jun 1998, then your subscription is due, if it reads Jun 1999 - then your all paid up.

The coming year will offer some challenges to the crew of Lilly-Ann. October shall see us moving on-board, putting our comfortable home at Manly up for rent. And next May cruising north for 6 months. I don't know how I'm going to survive without my large 5 car garage as a workshop. Among my current projects, is scarfing and shaping 40 foot long 65x19mm pieces of White Beech for a replacement belting - even the car has had to find a place outside. What am I going to do without a bench, vice, horses, table saw, and square metres of valuable flat concrete? Ahhhh! Perhaps you live-aboards can give me some tips for shed withdrawal. Its also that time of years again when Lilly Ann makes her way up the slip for a weeks worth of frantic activity. This year's schedule includes removing the prop shaft to be straightened, and realigning the engine and bearings in hope of solving a long term problem that has had us become accustomed to the synchronised ballet associated with an *engine alignment*, the set adorned with an assortment of props including: feeler gauges, calipers, levers, hydraulic jacks, beams, and chains. Performances of this well rehearsed number have been given on the hardstand, marina berths, and whilst anchored at Gary's Anchorage - Fraser Island. To regress slightly, the practical readers amongst you may be wondering about those 40 foot lengths of White Beech



Lilly Ann on the Wynnum Manly Yacht Club Slipway.

belting, and in particular, how perhaps I shall venture to deliver these to the gunwales of Lilly Ann tethered to her berth in Manly Harbour. The answer - walk it - its only 3 km, 2 roundabouts, a set of lights, and a handful of corners. Amongst the sceptics was my Father-in-law, who, I'm sure had visions of the British comedy skit - *The Plank*. Well! The first of four such journeys (each belting is a laminate of two), was undertaken last Sunday morning 0700 hours, and well before the opening time of the Manly pub. I had no wish to upstage the traditional German band that was to feature later that day. Instead I opted for bewildered early morning joggers on the esplanade. All went to plan - the *Plank* even bending around the sharp corners of the marina pontoons.

Back to FN. A warm welcome to the new members from our sister club in Denmark: Carsten & Kis Jørgensen / Olsen, Egon Back Sørensen, Johannes Kjærgaard, Peder Jensen, Peter Ramlau-Hansen.

Steve and Shelley from their new Hartley "Kumax" join us from Gladstone. They have just undertaken significant repairs to their hull - redoing a less than satisfactory job by a previous owner - we eagerly await news of the completed job.

Mahesha aboard "Sea Mentality" has been thinking about the '99 Ferro Cruise - well done! Don't be slack everybody - please

write and let us know your thoughts etc - even to register your interest to participate. Mahesha is also planing to assist with the delivery of a 19m Swan from the US. I'm a little green with envy - aren't you?

We also welcome the first of a series of articles from Keith Flemming aboard Zodiac. We hear the latest from the decks of the land locked "Mystery". Ray and Cindi aboard "Ray's Hell" are now corresponding from their new location at Dampier, WA!

*Ian McFarlane S/V "Lilly Ann"*

inside...

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# Mystery Extensions

By Doug Wallace S/V "Mystery"

**T**hanks for the latest issue Ferro News and the book review. The interior refit is going ahead in leaps and bounds. My new thwartships saloon table is 19mm solid oak flooring on stainless angle at the outboard end and a stainless bracket on the mast compression post at the other. The old fore and aft table was laminex on chipboard with a plywood support at the aft end. The seats either side with storage under have the fronts leaning forward to give more foot space. I am planning to have a small opening hatch/skylight directly above the table to provide light and ventilation. The dingy will be stowed upside down on



2 layers of 5mm sq. mesh outside and 1 inside.

chocks above this skylight so in heavy monsoonal downpours the misty splash of the rain can,t get below. (The dingy will be on deck to prevent it filling with rain and sinking). Also, the wind blowing over the rounded bottom of the dingy will tend to form a low pressure area under it, sucking hot steamy cooking smells out of the skylight. The whole arrangement should act like a large super efficient venturi/dorade ventilator. The fridge/ sink unit is in place but I have to make a mould for the fibreglass icebox liner. My sink has a hand pump for fresh water and a foot pump for salt. The sink is only a few inches above the worst case scenario educated guessed at new waterline level so I hope it will drain. If not, I have room in the kickspace to mount another foot pump to empty the sink! (Does your boat drain on both tacks?) My quarter berths are finished with

the ply tops lifting in two pieces to access the storage below, and removable partitions give access to the batteries, fuel and water tanks and filters under the cockpit. At the moment I am framing up the

stove unit (42mm X 19mm meranti). The space where the broadwater single burner kero stove swings is lined with sheet stainless steel. The fuel tank is accessible so it can be filled, pumped up and the shut off tap can be easily reached, not buried at the back of some locker. I am designing a galley drawer that has to be lifted before it will slide open, and will not come all the way out



There is a ply deck on the opening with a smaller hatch in it.

unless a bolt in the cupboard below is opened. It is a fairly deep drawer, but one drawer with a top tray for cutlery and space below for less used things is less work than making two smaller drawers.

**I**n reply to Barry Stott s/v OLIVER B BOMMELL regarding the repair of large areas of underwater damage. I would be hesitant about using Epoxy Mortar to



Top: Ready to plaster, note the tennis ball steering limiter buffers. Above: 6mm steel rods welded to original steel, new transom 16mm rebar. Left: Plastered and curing for 1 month with siphon dripper and sprinkler inside hull turned on a couple of times a day.

repair any holes bigger than about 30cms diameter because the mechanical differences in flexibility and coefficients of thermal expansion between real cement and plastic cement over larger areas could result in hairline cracks around the boundary of the dissimilar materials letting water into the steel work or worse. Concrete is much cheaper over large areas, it,s just the inconvenience of keeping it wet for a month to cure properly that drives people to the quick and easy epoxies which are fine for small holes. Provided the edges of the wound are properly cleaned of loose flakey bits, acid etched, well rinsed, blow dried, painted/sprayed with epoxy bonding agent and plastered with ordinary cement mortar while the bonding agent is still wet, the result is a homogeneous mass with no large discontinuities to create stress areas.

↗



Unveiled! The join is very fair and will be invisible when painted.

## WATER - we need lots of it aboard

By Keith Flemming S/V "Zodiac"

**T**he way some cruisers use water you would think that they were connected to the shore supply. When you float around the Whitsundays as we do and see 4 or 5 crew have an early morning swim and then a 5 minute shower each, we have bets on how many days it will be before they complain that their water tanks were not filled properly. For those taking up the cruising life style the first lesson to learn is how to conserve water and make a little go a long way. The judicious use of salt water can stretch the fresh water supply considerably longer. The rest is up to the yacht owner to see that there is sufficient storage and method of replacing the storage by either natural or mechanical means. You have to think well past dropping into marinas every time you are getting short. When planning out your water requirements you first have to take into consideration the configuration of the hull, If you have bought a second hand boat or considering building you need to sit back and look at the design of the boat as to where you can store water. The second hand boat will already have tanks fitted and you may not have much room to move to improve the situation. The older designs with deeper keels lend themselves to fitting stainless tanks in the keel, Many of the modern yachts with little room in the bilges lend themselves to the use of water makers. Up until the present I have been biased against water makers because of the quality of the unit and the amount of power required to drive them. Light weight yachts and catamarans do not sail well with big weights in them so these devices are becoming 'must have' units in a lot of modern yachts. With the addition of a water maker the reserve capacity is not so vital and most suited to shallow bilge vessels. The most suitable method of holding drinking water is in stainless steel tanks. These can be built and shaped to suit various lockers around your craft should you feel that you need extra storage. Fibreglass

tanks are not the best and I have seen many a fibreglass tank with the top cut out and a stainless tank fitted inside. Two things I would stress in the design of water tanks and that is the fitting of a large screw top tank lid that will not leak and at the lowest point a drain tap. The outlets can be taken off the top of the tank which is best and a means of filling the tanks either with a deck fitting or for in cabin fitting, you will also need a pipe for venting / overflow. The easiest way of dipping a tank is with a piece of wood. Make sure that all the hoses to and from the tank are good quality hoses, not garden hoses. Keeping the tank filled is the next important aspect to consider. Once you get into the swing of cruising you will find that you do not visit marinas very often so your water supply will have to depend on the rain. This means having a big efficient sun shade/ water catcher. The boat owner should give lots of thought to the design of this catcher so that it provides lots of area and is very efficient. All you Southerners will end up doing most of your cruising on the East Coast and in the tropics. This will give you some appreciation of the need to have a BIG awning. One that at least covers the boat from the mast to the stern and the full width of the boat. This will keep down below cool and give a good area on which to catch water. You will see many types of shade covers and most of them are no good at all for the serious cruiser. A cover needs to be made of material that is UV protected, water proof, easy and quickly erected and taken down, and will fold up easily for storage below. Most of the time it can be carried on the deck just as you would carry a sail. It should have no ribs and all tie downs should be stainless or nylon snap clip. It should be able to withstand 40 knt winds and have sides but no front and back so that the wind can just whistle through unimpeded. The catcher should not be supported on the boom but be free standing from each corner. If you are going cruising you are going to need a 'targa' bar of



some kind across the stern of your boat to carry aerials, solar panels, radar if you have one, the wind generator and dan buoy. So if you are preparing a boat for cruising the first thing you need 'targa' the 'targa' bar. It can be made quite cheaply and strong from tube stainless. A couple of stainless saddles welded on each side of the framework will hold the rear end of the water catcher. The other end is clipped onto the cap shrouds. You will need to be able to walk forward along the deck while the catcher is up so when designing it make sure you make it high enough. A stainless cable clincher on each shroud will hold the snap hook in place. You will also take a short rope around the mast to support the middle front. Above the cockpit the water outlet (nylon skin fitting 1 inch) is in the middle and a cord is taken from this fitting down to the cockpit to form the dam to lead the water to the skin fitting. A short hose is then taken from this to the cockpit filler or deck filler what ever you have. The catcher is made from heavy duty acrylic pvc and make sure you have it electronically welded not sewn. The water will leak through the needle holes if you have it sewn. A professionally made cover to suit a 40 footer will cost you about \$1200. and will last about 10 years. That is \$120 a year for shade, water and convenience. Well worth the money. When I first started cruising it was said that you had to have your boat fitted out traditionally. Thank goodness sanity has prevailed and most boats are now being built to make life as easy and efficient as possible. We now have lots of battery power and a good means of replacing that power. So electric pumps are the go and as only one tap at a time is ever used on a yacht you only need one pressure pump to push water to all points of the boat. But do have one pump somewhere on the boat that is a hand pump just in case you should have a motor burn out and you can still get water up from the tanks. Over the sink (I can never see the reason for twin bowl sinks in a yacht) you should have a saltwater tap that is either fitted to a foot pump so both your hands are free to scrub plates

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# FERRO 99

By Mahesha Goleby s/v Sea Mentality

**A**s I sit in my wheelhouse... I've just found out the USA to Australia delivery trip (a 19m Swan) has been delayed again! Hopefully I'll find out about the 'if' & 'when' next week (unfortunately it's always been 'next week'). Then, I look at the cavern I've created, hull to hull emptiness as this section gets my 'too little' attention. All this refitting work to do and I'm thinking of going to sail other people's boats - crazy (or desperate).

Regarding Ferrocement Enthusiasts Reunion & Roll Out '99 (or substitute Regatta Organisation on the end), F.E.R.R.O '99, I'll start the ball rolling and accept (with trepidation) the Coordinators hat. So here goes (and this is all tentative, pending feedback and favourable responses from you).

## FERROCEMENT ENTHUSIASTS REUNION & ROLL OUT, 1999.

FERRO '99 (alliterative acronyms considered)

These few notes are a guide for the VOLUNTEERS we'll need to get this event rolling. Please help! Pick, say one bit to organise, and let me or Ian (in the event of me hopefully being o/s for 7 to 9 weeks.) know first before you do anything in case its already taken. Thanks and read on ...

**WHEN** ....The first FERRO '99 will be held somewhere between January 1 and May 1999 possibly to coincide with other water events/shows. We'll need a Brisbanite to do some legwork and find a suitable date(s), please, possibly a long weekend (Easter?). Is there a River Week? Ask the BCC or yacht clubs. A volunteer step forward.

**WHERE** .... Ditto for a venue finder. The Brisbane river/Moreton Bay seems an obvious general location with vessels holed up for the cyclone season, busily earning more money to go north again. Venue/s to be determined depending on events, etc, you may want, see further on.

**WHY** .... to share common interest and information and have a good time with our vessels of choice and another reason to go sailing/motoring. Nb: Ferrolight

(aka ferro epoxy) included in the celebrations. OK with everybody? more help wanted ...

**ASSISTANT CO-ORDINATOR** (Brisbane based) wanted to assist by running the local office! I'm not the easiest to reach during the day. (ps: you can assume the co-ordinator role if you wish. I'm doing this by default so far and have the desire to see it happen, not because I have any promotional skills...)

**ELECTRONIC PROMOTIONS...** Alternative meetings could be synchronised in other centres, say Townsville, or overseas, even! Are there Ferro stronghold around. Does anyone have an internet/email address and will spread the word? Another volunteer for the position of Electronic Information Officer. Wow, who wouldn't want that title. Initially, this article perhaps could be spread to get responses (pretty please).

**VISUAL PROMOTIONS...** Artists line up here. Thoughts, drawings, photos, cartoons suitable for promotion use are required. If someone does screen printing, A T-shirt for the event could be organised. I can make a screen and supply inks for printing on BYO shirts on the day/s, but need some artwork - something simple, one colour, on A4, laser printed will do me to make the mask if no-one else takes the task for a more sophisticated layout. Also, we need photocopying of promo sheets to send you, etc. Unfortunately I don't have access to a modern computer/printer so you guessed it, who'll mkae up the promo flyer? what a lot of work to do in a short time, less than a year to the event, let's go ... Give me a buzz, fax or snail mail. Numbers, etcetera at the end. That looks like several Promotions Officers are required.

**MEDIA PROMOTIONS...** We might get some media interest on or near the event. Does anyone out there have media contacts (TV/radio/paper)? I hope to have a radio job after my return from the US and may develop some contacts but I'm still a long way from Brissy to be of immediate use. Lets see

what happens but in the meantime hands up who'd like to help out with this. Is there a budding Journalist out there who will cover this story for the local rags, perhaps, or preferably to the boating magazines?

**some events ....**

**PRESENTATIONS...** I would like to see display/s from individuals on the construction of their vessels. eg a photo board! If a slide show is considered by anyone, keep it to about 20 minutes maximum please and rehearse your script and keep it lively. The same for video presentations or people will loose interest. I'm presuming there will be curious onlookers who don't live, breath, and sail (or motor) FERROs. These events suggest a club hall is needed.

**HISTORICAL PRESENTATION...** There HAS to be a history buff who will enmesh us with facts, figures and photos of ferrocement vessels (and other ferro curiosities) since day dot. Step forth and start preparing. Snippets of information may be forwarded to the Official Historian when s/he makes themselves known or via me or FN. Everyone start noting info, books, references, people, etc, to do with ferro stuff to help her.him begin.

**GASTRONOMIC RECREATION ...** I'd like to have a BBQ at a riverside park or boating club one afternoon/evening (or both). Suggestions! There is a nice park just inland of the Gateway Bridge on the southside with plenty of anchoring space (or was when I spent a few nice weeks there). Check for toilets, we could move enmass the next day up or down the stream to another spot? I'm not generally a party person so make your requirements and ideas known to the organisers. Likely watering holes, restaurant, bar, club, private house are alternatives or additions. Decisions, decisions!!

**OPEN VESSELS ...** Does anyone want to have an open boat on the day/s for the public (or closed) to enthusiasts only. I envisage 1) a wired and unplastered hull, 2) a complete bare hull, 3) a finished vessel ... more of those 'V'\* people needed. A map of the location (or UBD reference) would be required as would transport for the waterbound of

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us. (\* Volunteers)

**A REGATTA ...** I don;t know the legal implications of having a fun unofficial regatta, but a ROWgatta could be had with tenders representing the mother vessel??? Perhaps the AYF or the Cruising Yacht Club can be approached by a yet-to-step-forward Regatta Officer. How about a sail or motor past the city centre in convoy and/or an evening sail around a few bouys in Moreton Bay? Its your event, so I stress again **FEEDBACK PLEASE!!! PRIZES...** Sponsors and Judges required for various categories of judging. Possibilities are Best dressed/presented vessel, spotted dog (I Win), most travelled vessel, Best dressed crew, best and fairest hull,

more categories needed especially fun ones.

**COMMERCIAL DISPLAYS...** depending on how big this gets, representatives of Ferro specific subjects might want to have a presentation. Any objections? How about coating systems (paint, epoxy), concrete association, designers/builders, and so on. Some engineers/uni students may be interested in discussing thin skin concrete structures, hmmm! There must be a couple of Engineering Associations, and there are several Unis with engineering faculties.

Well, that is the beginning of what is appearing to be a limitless event - please respond with numbers (possibly) attending, suggestions, and most of all **HELP** to get this off the ground (or is

that 'in the water'?) Get back in time to be published in the net FN (there are only a few issues before **THE EVENT**)

Thanks and see you at FERRO '99.

Mahesha Goleby  
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Ph/Fax 07 4129 4146 (0500 - 0630, 1630 - 2100) may have to give a quick call if the fax isn't on ...

R

**ZODIAC** by Keith Flemming S/V "ZODIAC"

**M**y Yacht Zodiac. Laurie (wife) and I decided to retire onto a yacht and started looking at Cairns in 1988. We saw Zodiac tied up in the creek at Cairns and we fell in love immediate It looked like a real sail boat and at 40 ft was certainly long enough to live aboard. It took quite awhile to convince the then owner Keith Quinn to sell us the boat. Zodiac was built by Greg McGannon at Melton in Vic and completed in 1976. The yacht is a 'Zodiac' design from the drowning board of Khan Walker a leading Australian designer and builder of ferro yachts. She was built upright around plywood bulkheads with 1/4 inch high tensile steel rods on 2i inch centres parallel to the water. This was covered with galvanised square mesh with 5 layers. She was laid up by Khan and his crew from Geelong. There was no tubing or pipe used in the construction and a steel shoe was welded on the bottom of the keel and up towards the bow by about 10 feet to protect it from grounding or reef bashing. The bottom of the keel is 3 feet wide in the middle and all flat so the boat will sit up if grounded. In the 10 years we have owned her we have never laid her over, and only sat

her on the bottom once. The Perkins 4236 is mounted in the keel as is the two stainless water tanks. While she is 20 years old she is as good as she was when launched. We lived on her for 6 years and still now spend about 1/3 of the year aboard. We keep everything in top order. She has a plywood deck to keep the weight down and is a great sail boat in everything over 15 knots, with 7 knots of speed quite frequent in good breezes. It is a cutter rig and was built with the best of materials to the highest standard. We are now based at the Whitsundays and come from Melbourne. When we bought her we sailed her down to Melbourne and spent 12 months getting her into cruising mode. We have been to Lizard Island 4 times and to the Louisiades in PNG 3 times and intend going there again this year. We have holed her twice above the water line in the early days and repaired it with fibreglass that took very well and does not show. That was about 8 years ago. On the subject of repairs I was talking to an international from Aberdeen in Scotland who is in the underwater oil game and he mentioned a product called



'Speedorete'. It forms into a putty and sets underwater quite quickly. I did have a problem one year with the antifoul dropping off within a month after being put back in the water. This was caused by too many anodes. Because the anodes eat away very quickly I doubled the size and the number and the paint fell off. As soon as I went back to the two small tear drop anodes I had no further problem. We have no rust, osmosis, dry rot etc and are very happy with our Zodiac. We have seen about 10 other yachts of the same design and can recommend them.

R

(Continued from page 3)

before you wash them or a dedicated pressure pump to the same inlet if you can afford it. This tap will become the most used tap on the boat. Every time you wash your hands, soak the saucepans, rinse the dishes, as well as supply clean fresh seawater for cooking the veggies and rice. You will marvel at how little fresh water you use once you have installed a salt water tap. Pure fresh undiluted rainwater can be prone to developing a small amount of algae.

This is not harmful to the body but if it develops in the tank then it will often show up in a glass of drinking water.

Other problems you can have with shore side water is an awful taste of chlorine. Once you get used to drinking your tea and coffee from rain water it tastes awful when you go ashore. When collecting rain water from a water catcher it pays to let the first couple of gallons run into the cockpit before directing it into the tanks. With the addition of a in line water filter with a carbon cartridge at a cost of about \$75

this will filter out any algal chlorine or dirt. The cartridges can be scrubbed after about 1 month to lengthen their life. I get about 6 months out of a cartridge that costs \$14. On most tanks the outlet pipe does not quite reach the

bottom so the algae is always left in the bottom. This is why it is important to have a drain cock so that to the tank is emptied you drain off any dirt and give it a little flush before refilling. We have 2 tanks on Zodiac and we only ever put shore side water in one of the tanks, which is rare. Make sure the pressure pump has a dedicated switch and always turn it off when leaving the boat for a long time. Once you start living aboard you will learn how to be frugal and to ration it out providing you have enough means of replacing the water. Do not rely on marina water as most of it tastes awful.

## CRACKS? letter by Richard Hartley

**T**

he presence of what appears to be hairline cracks in the hull, often only noticed when the hull has first cured or after all coatings have been sand blasted off alarm many ferrocement boat owners. In most cases the present of these should be of little concern to the owner - either not really being penetrating cracks at all or normal loading cracks. Being concerned about these in our hull, we wrote a letter to Hartley's shortly after the hull had cured, in 1979. What follows is the reply from Richard Hartley:

Dear Sir,

You will probably find that the cracks or air marks on your hull are not cracks at all. If you examine them with a strong magnifying glass, you will probably find that they are streaks in the hull. They look very much like cracks but, if you tried to get the edge of a razor blade or something like that, into the crack, you will find that it just won't go in.

Even if they were cracks, they would still not be detrimental to the hull, the application of the plaster over the grout inside the hull, will force the grout into any cracks in the first skin.

*In the earlier days here in new Zealand we did have a few cracked hulls brought about by the first skin being applied, and then workmen walking around on the inside of the netting. In those days they did not realise that you had to put stage planks down on the frames and floors and keep your weight on them while you plastered the inside. We had other cases where boats were blown over before the second coat was applied and their hulls were cracked. In all cases when the second coat was applied in the inside, it eliminated the cracks on the outer hull. We kept track of these boats for years, and they never have any trouble.*

*There has been one or two cases mostly in professional yards, where through shifting the boats out into the direct rays of the sun too soon, or through shifting the hulls too soon, they were cracked. We found after a period of 3 months, that the cracks has disappeared. We have the cement manufacturing technical committees inspect these boats, and they formed the opinion that the cracks in a hull which has been plastered only for a few months, are self healing. The owner of one of these professionally build boats was not happy about his hull having cracks in it, even though they were above the water line, and the agreement was that the boat would be painted, used for three years, and then, if there was any problem with the paint,*

*the professional team would repaint the hull. In three years time the hull would need repainting anyway. We recorded where the cracks were, and had photographs to show exactly where they were, but when we scraped the hull down, we could not find them - they had self healed. In a "Golden Cowrie" hull (a 37 footer) we deliberately cracked the hull with a sledge hammer and at the end of the second season scraped the paint off, and again there was no sign of a crack and at no time did the boat leak or cause any problems from the crack. We cracked the boat two months after the last plaster has been applied to the top deck, and it would be about three months after the hull had been plastered with the first coat.*

Yours Sincerely

**Richard Hartley**

*R*

# Your Say - Letters

Hello Fello Ferro Flyers!

Greetings from the very picturesque Hampton Harbour, Dampier. Rays's Hell has been at anchor here for over 3 weeks already, and the social rounds have kept us very busy, such is the nature of the Hampton Harbour Boat and Sailing Club. Our trip north from Canarvon was wonderful, a mixture of 35 knots plus on the first day out, and 15-18 knots on the beam for the rest of the 10 day voyage, which saw Ray's Hell reaching along at speeds of up to 8 1/2 knots and anchoring every night in such places as Mauds Landing, Norwegian Bay, Tantabiddy, Long Island and the small port of Onslow. We



reached Dampier early on the 10th day out, and were greeted by fellow ferro flyer Leon (Beggars

Choice) as we entered the channel. It turned out that Ray's Hell is the first yacht to reach Dampier this season, and in fact it was 3 weeks before the next yachts appeared, all 3 of which are heading for Darwin via the Kimberly. We have decided to pause once again and enjoy the Dampier area until September.

Take care,

*Ray and Cindi, and Bodhi. s/v "Ray's Hell"*

Hi there guys and glad to hear that puss is still aboard. Sounds like you had a great sail north with that beam wind - something that's difficult to find on the east coast. Why not send us some photos of the Harbour, the Yacht Club, or even the country-side around Dampier or some of your previous ports of call (or both). In September where do you think you will head? A quick glance at the atlas suggests Broome, Derby, or Darwin maybe? Now that Ray's Hell is keeping Beggars Choice company, perhaps you can work on Leon to drop FN a story and maybe a photo of Beggars Choice.

-ED

## DRY STORAGE

A TIP by Mahesha Goleby

Impossible? I recycle thick (0.15mm), tough as all harry, plastic bags my job which I use on the boat to keep electrical and other sensitive 'stuff'. They are sealed with removable clamps made of 16mm hard polyethylene (not pvc) irrigation pipe. A single slit is made longitudinally in the tube and the ends of the slit rounded. A jig and a Stanley knife do the trick, but an easier method needs to be found. Have the tube say, 20mm longer than the bag mouth, then slide onto the folded mouth. Works a treat. Hardware and rural supply stores often use this type of bag.

## CONTACTS

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Vessel Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Port: \_\_\_\_\_

Design Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Length: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail To: Ian McFarlane, 69 Manly Road, Manly Q 4179, Australia

## FOOD AFLOAT - PART I

By Trudy Snowdon S/V "LillyAnn"

Several years ago, during one of our usual 'off-the-track' holidays in far north Queensland, Ian and I undertook a five day bushwalk along the eastern side of Hichinbrook Island, relying only on what we could carry on our backs (and a few coconuts scrounged along the way!). It will remain one of our memorable experiences - reminding us that the trials and tribulations of the office are irrelevant.

In preparation for the trek we spent hours deciding what food we were going to carry. Being our first trip of that duration we relied heavily on pre-prepared packaged meals, pasta or rice, tins of tuna, crispbreads and lots of chocolate. We ate every last scrap of food we carried with our last meal consisting of sultanas, cocoa powder, milk powder and rice boiled up into a concoction. We found that the shop bought products to be unappatising, meager and full of insidious chemicals which are of a concern if you have food allergies such as we do. We also found that over the course of the walk the food we had packed was inadequate in terms of the nourishment we needed to replenish the energy used during the day. We were going hungry!

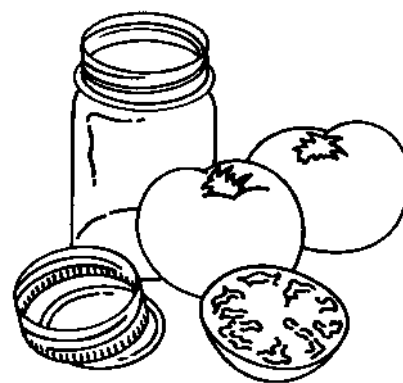
Several years down the track I again found myself confronting the problem of what food to pack, this time for our 2 month trip to the Whitsundays in Lilly Ann. As we have been unable to reach a consensus on the location and size of a built in fridge we continue to make do with a portable Engel 39 litre chest fridge strapped to the dinette seat. The role of the fridge is mainly seen as storage for the most important item of cruising - namely the liquid amber so crucial during sundowners, and it is not generally used for storage of food.

I decided this time I couldn't cope with unappatising shop bought packaged pasta meals. Anyway, Captain Cook managed to sail to Australia and around the Pacific without a fridge so I figured I could do the same. A little bit of research and ingenuity was used in preparing Lilly Ann's larder for our trip.

A good source of information on food planning and cooking while cruising is "Food on the Go" by Janet Groene. The author goes through in some detail as to how to menu plan, stock food appropriately and gives some interesting ideas on cooking and use of ingredients. The book however is American and some things that the Author talks about (tinned butter!) do not appear to be available in Australia - at least not that I've found! The book despite this, is a good starting point for ideas.

We rely heavily on pasta, grains, legumes and rice as the basis of many of our meals. We often eat vegetarian meals of soups, stews, pies, gratins etc. which are very wholesome and filling. For fruit and vegetables we carry a good supply of tinned food. We also find that the dehydrator comes in handy and we carry a range of dehydrated vegetables and fruit as well. What fresh fruit and vegetables we carry are stored in the green long life plastic bags that you can buy in the supermarket and put in the Esky. Potatoes and onions, which do not need cooling are stored in boxes under the galley. However, as it is often a long time between ports it does not concern us when fresh supplies run out. Bread is another problem when you rely on the shop bought variety. I remember meeting a sea-wife on an isolated island beach who proudly boasted to me that she had 16 loaves of bread in her freezer on board. I politely listened, while counting up the hours of engine running needed to keep that bread from thawing. I have found it much easier to make my own and I carry supplies of flour and yeast to make bread.

As we are not vegetarians we do get cravings for meat, and again a long time can pass between steak dinners at yacht clubs. Fish is fine for awhile, whenever you catch it. As we have limited refrigeration we carry about two meals worth of fresh meat at any one time so we have investigated other possibilities for the preservation of meat - namely dehydration and bottling.



Both methods have worked successfully for us.

That leaves us with the other staple we just can not do without - cheese. We use preprocessed cheese for about 85% of the time. It is quite adequate and requires no special storage or preservation. Cheese spread is also a useful item for sandwiches and snacks. Processed cheese however, is not the same as fresh cheese and we have discovered ways and means of preserving different types of fresh cheese without the need for refrigeration.

Over the next few articles I will go through a number of topics related to the preservation, storage and use of food on the cruising yacht. This will include menu planning, storage, bottling, dehydration, and a few other things. So I hope that, if you are as concerned with eating well during your trip as I am, then you will find some useful tips from my rantings and ravings. If you have some good ideas of your own, let me know as I am always eager to hear new or old, ideas!

### DEHYDRATED FOODS

Dehydration is certainly a cheap and simple way of preserving a range of foods especially meat, fruit and vegetables. I own a dehydrator - a cheap K-tel model bought in K-mart or Big W which has proven sufficient for my requirements to date.

The benefit of dried food is that it takes up much less space, which is an important factor to the cruising person. With many foods it is also not necessary to refrigerate or freeze the end product, which is also important if you do not have much fridge space to spare, as in our case.

The time it takes to dehydrate food is dependent upon a number of factors.

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This includes how much moisture content the food has and how thick or thin the food is. For example, the drying time for a batch of beef jerky, which has been cut to thin wafers, can be from about 4 to about 8 hours in a dehydrator. For sun-dried tomatoes they can vary from about 6 hours to 10 hours in a dehydrator. The thing is with dehydrating is that you need to check your produce regularly to ensure that it doesn't dry out too much and burn.

It is necessary to ensure that the food is completely cool and dry before you pack it away. Storage is an important factor with dehydrated food. It is best therefore to store your end produce in a well sealed jar or snap lock bags, preferably with little air inside, and stored in a reasonably dark part of the boat. If possible, store your dried produce in smaller portions in containers rather than in a few large jars or plastic bags. Each time you open a jar, moisture from the air enters and is absorbed by the contents, so the less frequently you open the jar the better. Proper storage of your dried foods is essential, as moisture can cause your produce to go mouldy and too much exposure to light may also cause your dried foods to lose colour and flavour.

Dried food can be used in a number of ways. Jerkys, dried fruit, fruit leathers and dehydrated soup all make great snack foods. Our supply of beef jerky usually goes in the first few weeks of a cruise as we have become quite addicted to it. They are very convenient and instant sources of nourishment when you are underway and it is inconvenient to cook a meal. Dried produce can also be reconstituted using water and may be used in general cooking as a substitute for fresh produce. This involves waiting until the dried food has absorbed the liquid in which it is soaked.

Now that I've introduced you to the concept of dehydration, here are a few recipes and ideas that you can try out for yourself.

#### **Reduced fat cheese.**

I haven't tried this one yet, but it sounds interesting! Buy your favourite cheese, grate or slice thinly and place on solid sheet in dehydrator. Dry at 55c for 8 hours. Depending on the cheese, there

will be a certain amount of fat. Absorb on a paper towel, wipe the solid sheet and dry cheese for a further 1 hour, on a paper towel placed on a solid sheet. Repeat this process if cheese is very fatty. Store in a glass jar. There is no need to refrigerate cheese. Slices are delicious as a snack or use grated cheese in sauces, omelettes and scrambled eggs, or sprinkle on tomatoes or toast, then grill.

#### **Beef Jerky.**

Appropriate beef such as round, sirloin, loin, rib-eye etc. (as long as it is boneless and not too fatty or tough) and use a marinade of your choice - a good one consists of soy sauce, honey, dry sherry, crushed garlic, fresh ginger



sliced, pinch of chilli powder, sesame oil or other appropriate oil.

Cut visible fat from meat and slice the meat into thin slices - the thinner the slices the crunchier the jerky will be. Blend all your marinade ingredients and marinate your meat for a couple of hours or overnight.

#### **Leathers.**

Fruit leathers are rolled sheets of pureed and dried fresh fruit or vegetables and make great snack foods. Any combination of fruits can be used. Chop them roughly, place in a blender or sieve and mix to a smooth puree. It is necessary to add some liquid, use orange or other fruit juice. Blend

thoroughly until the mixture is free of chunks of fruit as these will not dry evenly. You can also add 1/4 cup of yoghurt and/or honey to the puree, if you like, or try coconut and/or honey for something different. Leathers may also be sprinkled with nuts or coconut before or after drying. It's up to you to experiment. Use a solid tray in your dehydrator, oiled or sprayed with a non-stick pure vegetable oil. Wipe with a paper towel. Use a food scraper or spatula to spread the mixture evenly over the tray. Add 1 tablespoon of lemon juice per tray to any fruit mixture with apples or bananas otherwise they tend to go brown when dried. Don't use too much mixture, just cover the tray as it takes less drying time. If you spread the mixture too thick, the leather may not dry properly.

Drying time may take up to 12 hours. But you may need to turn fruit leather over after 7 hours, but only if it can be easily peeled from the tray. If you can't, dry the leather longer.

Once completely dried, place the leather on a bench or table and roll up immediately. Leave to cool for 5 minutes before rolling in plastic wrap. If you prefer, leave the sheets whole and store them flat, separate by a piece of plastic wrap or waxed paper. When leathers are to be used, they can be cut easily with scissors into edible portions.

#### **Sun-dried Tomatoes.**

Roma tomatoes are good for drying. Cut the tomatoes in half and arrange them cut side down in your dehydrator. Tomatoes can take up to 12 hours to dry and need to be constantly checked. You may need to turn the tomatoes half way through drying. They are ready when they are dark in colour, wrinkly and quite leathery. Make sure they are properly cooled before packing away, as they can go mouldy.

Another way to store dried tomatoes is in oil in glass jars. This ensure that no air can get to the tomatoes and will not spoil. Our have lasted over 18 months when stored in oil. We have used both canola and olive oil for this purpose, and additional flavourings such as garlic, herbs or chilli can be added before sealing the jar. As well as the tomatoes, you end up with a richly flavoured oil which can be used in your cooking!