



For Safety's Sake . .

As I receive the bi-annual newsletter from the local V.M.R. unit in Mackay in Queensland, I was interested to learn who had to get rescued and why. I also wanted to see what were the causes of emergency calls made to V.M.R and see if there was anything that I should take note of and maybe change in the way I operate my boat.

The first thing that I read about was a lone fisher who was out fairly wide in a fourteen foot tinnie on a fairly rough day doing a bit of fishing. As the weather started to come up a bit he was on his way home when the motor stopped so he was looking to see if he could fix it when a wave managed to come over the transom.

Within a very short period of time the boat started to founder as more waves were able to come aboard and the boat settled further into the water. Before the guy could do anything about it the boat went down, in only a couple of minutes, and all he had time to grab was a lifejacket and the epirb. From what I was able to find out, he was adrift all night and heading out to sea when he was rescued next morning at first

Ebb & Flow

with Neil Dunstan

light. The chopper was able to locate him via the epirb signal and that saved his life.

I then went out to my boat in the shed and re-mounted the epirb in a position that was more easily accessible in the event of an emergency. It had been mounted in a reasonable position which was determined more for it being out of the way, than being in an ideal spot if I had to grab it in a hurry. While I was at it, I relocated a couple of lifejackets to a position where they could be grabbed quicker in an emergency if needed, as this guy said he only had seconds to get hold of the gear which saved his life.

Another interesting fact that I gleaned from the data published were the number and types of boats that had got into trouble. I estimate that probably about fifteen per cent of the boats in our area are larger diesel powered units. The interesting thing was that more than half of the boats rescued were of the larger diesel powered units. The common belief that diesel power is inherently more reliable may not be the case and I have gone back through the last couple of years and found this to be a common situation.

Of the outboard powered smaller boats rescued, almost all were because they had run out of fuel and very few had actually broken down which suggests that maybe modern outboard motors are just as reliable if not more reliable than the much vaunted diesel engines. However I would suggest that the fisher I

spotted twenty three nautical miles out to sea in a four metre Quintrex Hornet was pushing things a bit, especially as it was beginning to blow up around twenty plus knots.

What's In A Name?

Iwonder how many people give much thought to the naming of their boat? I have noticed some really weird, often witty and some whimsical names on boats ("Never Again - 4") which would indicate that whilst experienced owners do think about it pretty carefully, maybe some newcomers to boating aren't aware of the traditions and importance of naming a boat properly.

We should all be aware of some of the following points which I think are salient.

1. According to a very old mariners' superstition, it is bad luck to change the name of a vessel once it has been christened, therefore the name selected should be suitable for the vessel forever. Some may argue that this is only a stupid superstition, but it would be a braver man than I who would ignore this maritime tradition.

2. The name should be easily discernable during radio transmissions as it may be a matter of life and death. For example, if the name was something like Innaminka where the syllables were hard to distinguish between one another it could be a problem during times of poor radio transmission.

3. The name should not be overly long as during poor radio conditions the operator

may have to use the phonetic alphabet to get the message across and this only makes it even harder. A point to remember here is that you should know off by heart the name of your boat phonetically.

4. The name selected should make some sense, not like some I have seen made up of the first couple of syllables of the names of the kids, ie *Jojimake* [John, Jim, Mary, Ken]. These type of names are very hard to get across to a radio listener.

I named my boat "*Pedro*" as in *Pedro* the fisherman, an old song I used to like from many years ago. It has all the functions mentioned above and is known by many boaties around our way.

A good source of nice names is the star chart, giving names such as *Apollo* and *Gemini* as used on the space program. There used to be a charter boat which operated out of Gladstone in the seventies called *Rigil Kent*, and I often wondered where the name came from till one day I was looking through the star charts and came across the name *Rigil Kentaurus* which I presumed was the source of the name.

The trick then, is to come up with a name that meets all the safety criteria but can still be original and pleasing. It will be interesting to see what Editor PW names the new diesel *Quinnie* . . .

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