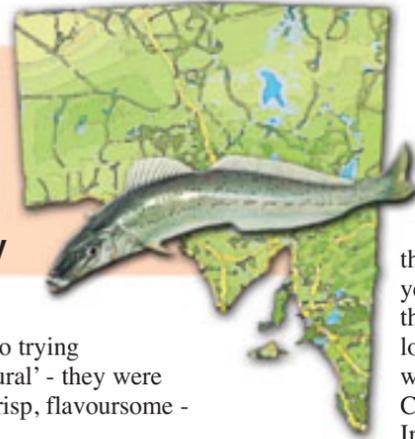




South Australia News

with Di Ross & John Batty



Fascinating Weather - Folk, Facts and Features

Some years back we embarked on the inaugural SA - Seafood and Aquacultural Trail in F&B #93-98 (my how time flies!) covering all the aspects of the industry and the family friendly towns, accommodation, stunning landscapes and seascapes and of course the fishing along the southern Eyre Peninsula.

We commenced our journey at Ceduna and have wonderful memories of the township and the people. Prominent local and charter operator, Perry Wills gave us a first class fishing coverage including showing us not only how to collect razor fish, but

tempted me to trying them 'au natural' - they were delicious - crisp, flavoursome - yum!

On the second day of our excursions around the islands of the Nyuts Archipelago, about mid afternoon, Perry announced that we should return to harbour as a strong weather front was on its way. I couldn't see any weather in the vicinity, but within half an hour the front was upon us. Perry had read the sky and as we made the long run back to the ramp in his 7m Shark Cat, the sea conditions were increasing but we were ahead of the main front.

Whilst we were cleaning our catch, he was telling us how he learned to understand the weather from the clouds above from a local weather man; how

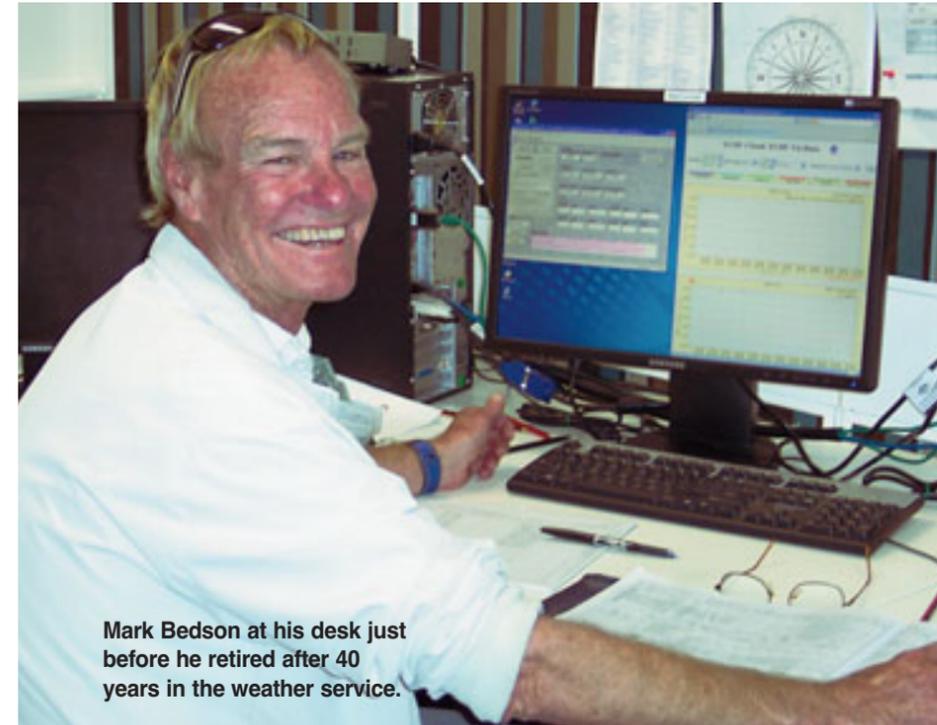
the cloud formations, density, colour and rotational movement and direction indicates what is about to occur. Of course we were quite fascinated at the time but the plug hadn't quite matched with the socket at that stage. A few years later on a further trip to the Ceduna area (yes we just love everything about our west coast) we noticed a Cloud Chart in the Visitor Information Centre - there it

was in full colour - 'Eye to the Sky and Be Weather Wise'.

With Perry's assistance we traced the Sky Reading Weather Man in Ceduna and made contact with him and his good wife - Mark and Bev Bedson.

Mark has retired from the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) after some 40 years of service. He has a wealth of knowledge and experience in weather surveillance, data compilation and analysis during his tasks at many weather station installations at both onshore and offshore facilities under the Australian Government jurisdiction.

When we approached Mark about our proposed editorial series all about



Mark Bedson at his desk just before he retired after 40 years in the weather service.



the weather, and specifically, how it impacts on the boating community, he was as enthusiastic as we were and his support was most welcome.

Starting with the Bureau back in 1971, Mark undertook specific training for extreme cold conditions in Tasmania, Victoria and NSW. He joined the Australian National Research Expedition to the Antarctica for the winter of 1974.

As a weather observer he has had duty tours to some very interesting parts of our country, all with specific relativity to Australian weather forecasting and data logging - Giles Weather Station at Kaltukatjira WA (some 50 km west of Docker River) and Willis Island, (some 400km east of Mossman QLD).

Here is a brief summary of the significance of these three very remote and diverse weather stations where Mark's duties took him:

Antarctica - The weather patterns forming around the ice-capped southern Antarctic continent predominantly influence the southern sector of the Australia landmass as the numerous condensed highs and lows generally move northward and fan out in an easterly direction toward New Zealand.

Willis Island (Left) Located on a beautiful atoll in the Coral Sea, this station has high input on the tropical storms forming along the warm equatorials along the equator. As these arrive in the Pacific Ocean the northern drift (ex Californian Coast) moves northward toward Japan and the southern drift (ex Chilean and Peruvian Coasts) tend south westerly toward Indonesia and the Northern Australian Coast. These storms are highly unpredictable and attract very close monitoring indeed as they have serious implications in crossing the land mass. They are unstable and are potential dangerous to property and human life.

Giles Weather Station (Left) There's no ice formations, no jade bergs, no tropical beaches, no lush growth, the largest populous would be Uluru-Ayers Rock some 270km to the east and yet it is one of the most visited Weather Stations in Australia. This is 'dry as a chip' country and in total opposite to the above two stations.

Giles is an important facility for the

Macquarie Island is a vital link in the chain of information that enables the BOM weather forecasters to assess weather trends and info back on the mainland. This is summertime - in winter, it is just a vista of pure white snow and ice. (Pic courtesy of Greg.Stone.au)

