

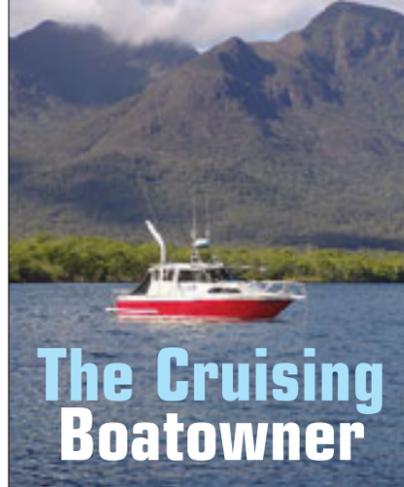
**A**s we've noted in this column a few times in recent months, there are a number of issues that will effectively stop a long planned cruise in its tracks. Given that some of these expeditions and cruises involve months, if not years of planning, to be forced to call a halt to proceedings because you ran out of drinkable water, or suffered a major freezer failure (and thus loss of food) copped a load of contaminated fuel, or had an anchor that wouldn't hold ground, would be catastrophic.

Any of these problems can ruin the best planned expedition, so it follows that cautious and experienced boatowners pay a great deal of attention to "future proofing" problems of these kinds to the absolute best of their ability, experience and available technology.

To that end, it's common these days to have multiple gensets, multiple freezers, multiple cooking systems, multiple water tanks (etc). Why the overkill? Because if the cost of adding an additional 200 litre polypropylene water tank to back up your main 500L stainless steel tank is only a couple of hundred dollars, in a vessel costing maybe a quarter of a million dollars (or much more), the insurance the secondary tank provides is priceless.

This cost (of what's called "redundancy planning") is absolutely negligible compared to the cost or loss of time in the cancellation of an expedition or cruise, let alone the cost of the boat itself.

Ironically though, one of the most crucial pieces of equipment onboard a



## The Cruising Boatowner

## Anchoring - For A Good Night's Sleep!

With Peter Webster & Ruth Cunningham

boat literally dates back to Noah's Ark, and without it, none of us can go anywhere. I'm referring to the ubiquitous anchor, available in a vast array of shapes and sizes, but all having the one fundamental application – to bring the boat to a safe halt and secure it for as long as the skipper chooses to be secured in that one spot.

It's really ironic when you think about it. Throughout Australia, we have many wonderful cruising boats ranging in cost from (say) fifty thousand dollars to several million dollars - and none of them can leave harbour unless they have (at least)

several good anchor systems onboard.

Further, despite the advent of computerised technology, men on the moon, and a period in history when technological breakthroughs are screaming ahead at a breakneck pace, here we have this most fundamental element of a cruising boat pretty much the same as it was back when Noah launched the Ark.

Now opinion varies as to whether Noah had onboard a couple of the Admiralty pattern anchors, a brace of Danforths, a decent plow, a Bruce anchor, a Sarca or a rock pick - but one thing is certain. History over the centuries shows us that without this most basic piece of boating equipment, nobody is going to leave the wharf, let alone go offshore cruising.

### DIY Splicing

I was contemplating these noble thoughts sitting on the Salty 27 in the drive way last weekend trying to remember how to make a soft splice between the 12mm 3 strand nylon anchor rope and umpteen metres of close coupled, proof tested 6mm chain.

As it happens, for some peculiar reason, I'm actually quite happy to splice ropes and find it almost therapeutic to quietly bring back some of the skills that I've acquired over the years – one of which was the ability to splice fairly well.

This was a little different and a bit harder, because there are several ways of splicing rope to chain, and nylon is always harder to splice than silver rope, because each of the three principle strands of nylon themselves consists of a couple of dozen tiny strands of nylon – and as you splice, they tend to get softer and more frizzled.

Silver is always easier to splice because once you've sealed off the ends with heat (a match, hot knife, etc) it tends to stay put, and has much stiffer strands to work with. Nylon, conversely, is lovely to work with in your hands, but it is very soft and does tend to fray or catch very easily.

On this occasion, I was becoming

**This is the result of the deliberations in this column for the new Salty. A 20lb CQR, 50m x 6mm close coupled proof tested chain, and 100 metres of 12mm 3 "strand" nylon. All of this is available fully spliced from BIAS marine shops or mail order.**



quite proud of myself, because the soft splice we wanted to join the 12mm rope to the new Salty's 6mm anchor chain, was coming along very nicely thank you and as the old ditty "wrap one, turn one, under one" ran through my mind, and the fourth coating of insect repellent had finally kept Paradise Point's entire sand fly population at bay for long enough to see what I was doing, I was feeling quite chuffed with myself; this was only my third attempt at getting the soft splice weaving properly, and it was coming along a treat.

At this point, Ruth Cunningham was head down into the anchor well vacuuming out all the aluminium filings – a job I totally supported because there's absolutely nothing worse than getting aluminium filings or shavings in nylon rope as it slides out through your hands – ouch!

We learned this particular job was necessary many boats ago, and because she's much smaller than yours truly it was her lot to virtually climb into the twin anchor wells on the foredeck, to clean them out, whilst I did bravura things in the splicing department.

As anybody who's ever spliced knows, it all stops and starts on those first lays of the 3 strands, and if you get one wrong – they'll each be wrong for the rest of the splice.

This was looking like a particularly fine splice and carefully working the 3 strands into form a taper, a few seconds with the hot knife flushed off the protruding 3 end strands, and presto! One beautifully tapered splice.

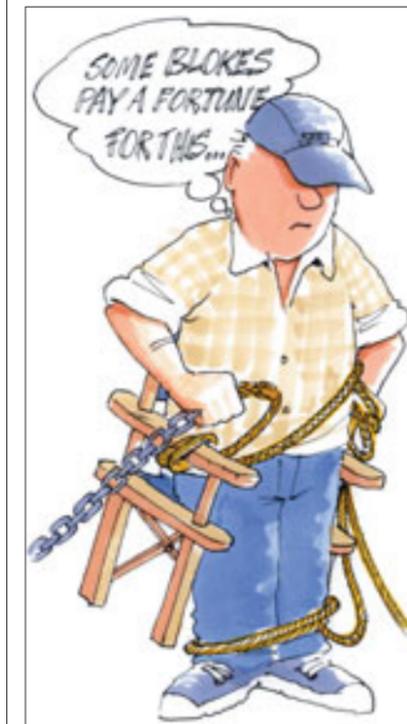
First job done, I stood up proudly and exclaimed "Hey, RC, check this splice out – who needs the chandlers to do this when I can make such a fine job of it myself?" And with a touch of brashness in my voice I proudly stood up to show her the splice.

As I did, the chair rose out from underneath my backside, and as I turned around to look at what was happening, I realised with no little horror that my beautiful splice had completely encased the arms of the chair in which I'd been sitting. With great skill, I'd successfully spliced the CQR anchor, 50 metres of chain, one deck chair and 100 metres of 12mm nylon rope into a single, continuous length . . .

Well, Ruth broke up. Laughing fit to bust, she asked "Pete, d'ya reckon the chair will go round the anchor winch

okay??? . . . She continued "I know (ha, ha, ha!) - you've joined the chair to the warp to make sure the anchor is going to sit on the bottom properly!" (chortle) . . . "But are you sure it will go around the bow roller . . ."

Well, Ruth was still laughing fully 15 minutes later. Worse, she'd picked up before me that to solve the problem I either had to chop up the chair to free the rope, or pass the anchor and 50m of close coupled 6mm chain through the arms of said chair . . . It was not, I must observe, one of my better moments in boating, and I suspect (I know!) Ruth's going to 'dine out' on this for at least the next 12 months.



Needless to say, after much pleading and cajoling, she finally stopped laughing long enough to come back down to ground level to give me a hand pushing through the 50m of chain, not to mention the 100m of rope (now!) so competently spliced through the arms of the b.....y chair.

In fact the afternoon got worse – by day's end, I'd managed to do no less than 8 or 9 splices, of which about only 4 will be ever used.

In the end, I managed to splice the aforementioned chair, one wrong length of chain, and put the wrong thimble on the wrong size piece of rope – at which point in time I called a halt to the proceedings and decided it was definitely time for a badly needed cold VB.

There is a moral to this story, and it is this: When buying your rope and chain from the chandler, keep firmly in mind they do an absolutely wonderful job of splicing for you, usually for no cost at all, or at worst, with just a small fee on top of the cost of the rope and/or chain.

Trust me, it's one of the better investments you'll make - and it could save you a small fortune in deck chairs!

### Chain Rope Ratios

It's been particularly interesting to reconsider our anchoring options for the new Salty 27 Expedition cruiser.

This is another one of those very important, quite expensive, but usually unseen costs associated with the development of "serious" cruising boats.

As noted earlier, cruising boats must deal with the issue of redundancy ie equipment breaking down, liquids becoming contaminated or chandlery being lost. It's quite common to lose a primary anchor, and that can be a very expensive process.

For example, a typical anchor system based on a 20lb plow anchor, 50m of close coupled grade "L" tested chain, and 100m of 12mm, good quality 3 strand nylon will cost you around \$600 from the likes of Bias Marine – or any of the better dealer chandleries.

Needless to say, this is not something you want to lose very often, and that's to ignore the obvious problem of what happens if you do lose the anchor. If this occurs, then the cruise must basically come to a halt unless you have a second or possibly a third anchor onboard.

### The Weight Issue

As boats get bigger, it's a misconception to think that the weight of the anchor system becomes of less consequence – in some cases the opposite can be true.

One of the obvious reasons is that as the boat gets bigger, then the thickness (and weight) of the chain increases exponentially. Here, 50kg of 6mm proof tested chain gave us 54m of chain; 50kg of 8mm gives 34m; 50kg/10mm gives 22m, and 50kg/12mm only 13m. Work them out - this can add up to a lot of weight to have up in the front of the boat.

Allowing a normal 5:1 scope ratio, if the foredeck bollard is a metre back