Choices Flooring Van Diemen's Land Circumnavigation Cruise

Newsletter No.2

28th September 2020

Topics Already Covered in VDL-C 2020 Newsletter No.1

Choices Flooring VDL-C 2021 and the Coronavirus Pandemic.
The Registration Queue.
Safety Requirements: Frequently Asked Questions:

- radio communications,
- insurance *Certificate of Currency*,
- no pets on board,
- a minimum of two experienced crew on board,
- bilge pumps,
- emergency steering,
- AIS

Cruise Documentation.
Transport, Fuel and Provisioning.
Crew Change Possibilities.
Berthing Arrangements.
Onshore Events and Happenings.

An Update on the Coronavirus Pandemic:

The *Choices Flooring* VDL-C 2021 Organizing Committee continues to take an optimistic view as to whether the cruise can go ahead. Pre-cruise planning continues apace amid some signs that Australian efforts to rein in the effects of COVID-19 (particularly in Victoria) are having some effect, and border restrictions may be more relaxed by the cruise commencement date.

Clearly, whatever are the quarantine requirements for people entering Tasmania over the period of the cruise will affect crew-change possibilities. Another risk to successful cruise participation from outside Tasmania is the possibility that there may be a resurgence of COVID-19 in the weeks or days immediately before (or during) the cruise, causing a sudden change in isolation or other quarantine restrictions. Because funds will already have been committed by the Organizing Committee, any mass refund is unlikely to be of each boat's entire entry fee. It should also be noted that, unless Tasmanian COVID-19 quarantine restrictions unexpectedly change substantially (invoking *Item 6*), refunds as a result of individual withdrawal from the cruise will be subject to the provisions of *Items 1 – 5* of the cruise *Refund Policy*.

In this context, prospective participants are again reminded of the first two paragraphs of the *Cruise Safety Requirements* (already published in Newsletter No.1):

> *All those taking part in Choices Flooring VDL-C 2021 do so at their own risk and responsibility. Neither the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania nor the Royal Geelong Yacht Club is responsible for the seaworthiness of a vessel whose entry is accepted, nor for the sufficiency or adequacy of its equipment or the competence of its crew.*
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> *No member or members of the Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania nor the Royal Geelong Yacht Club, nor any other party involved with the organisation of this event, shall accept responsibility for, or be liable for, any accident, injury, damage or personal loss (material or otherwise) to any vessel, participant, or third party, before, during or after* Choices Flooring *VDL-C 2021.*

HF Radio Certification:

As stated in the VDL-C 2021 Safety Requirements, Section 2.3 (Marine Radios), and reiterated in Newsletter No.1, to be eligible to participate in *Choices Flooring* VDL-C 2021 cruise, **participants must demonstrate they have an HF radio on board capable of using the cruise working frequency – 4483 kHz**. This can be done by calling one of the radio stations listed below from at least 100 nautical miles away. All but *Tas Maritime Radio* do not maintain continuous daytime listening watch, so an appointment must be made in advance. Please note that **failure to gain this certification renders you ineligible to join the cruise**.

Before calling, please ensure you have your AIS transponder switched ON, preferably half an hour before you begin your HF transmission. This will give the *MarineTraffic* website time to register your signal. As well as establishing from where you are transmitting, this will enable the certifying station operator to check you have a working AIS transponder.

When you call the shore station, the operator will assess both signal **strength** and **clarity**. To be acceptable, on a scale of 1 to 5, on the cruise working frequency of 4483 kHz, your radio must rate at a minimum of 2, preferably much better. The operator will pass on these ratings and whether or not your AIS is working to the VDL-C Organizing Committee.

Some Helpful Hints:

If you are having trouble achieving the requisite HF radio performance level, here are a some suggestions for improving your HF radio signal:

- Ensure all the cable connections (radio-to-tuner, tuner-to-antenna, tuner-to-earth) are in good order – making good contact, with no corrosion to inhibit electrical connection.
- The cable feeding the signal from the tuner to the antenna has to be unshielded (i.e. not coaxial) and thus should be separated as far as possible from anything that might act as even a partial earth. RF radiation wants to run along the surface of the metal-conducting medium (wire or a copper strip).
  This means:
  - the tuner should be as close as is practicable to the antenna so the unshielded cable feed is as short as possible, minimising the chance of RF radiation leakage before it reaches the antenna;
  - if the tuner is below deck, it should have a properly designed through-deck fitting for the cable feed;
  - if your antenna is an insulated backstay, spacers should separate the cable feed from the backstay below the insulator by at least 100mm (and be located at least that far from anything else).
- Check there is an effective earth connection from the tuner to the sea outside the hull.This is as important as unshielded cable separation on the antenna side of the tuner. If the earth strap is connected to a though-hull fitting or to a keel bolt, be sure to check the contact has not become corroded or too oily (particularly if it is in the bilge). For non-metallic hulls with plastic-encased ballast, a properly designed and weed-free earth plate on the outside of the hull below the waterline is essential. An earth plate is a good idea in any case for all non-metallic hulls.
- Be aware that transmitting from a marina berth, surrounded by aluminium masts and other electrically noisy devices, is unlikely to do justice to your transmission strength or clarity.
- If you have any doubts about the strength of the ship's battery to supply sufficient power, try transmitting with the engine running so that you are drawing power from the alternator, rather than the battery. It will sound noisy to you, but not necessarily to the receiving station.

HF Radio Certifying Shore Stations:

Smithton Radio:

This station is located on top of a hill on the far NW coast of Tasmania more than 100M from SE Tasmania and mainland Australia. It is run by Mary Kay, a long-standing friend of VDL-C cruises whose assistance with HF radio communication relays when ionospheric conditions are difficult has always been much appreciated. Mary runs daily HF radio scheds at 0620 and 1720 hrs. She may be listening outside these times, however it is better to make an appointment beforehand to ensure a mutually convenient time.

Contact information: ✆03 6452 2059 & ✆0427 251 936; email: *marykay36@bigpond.com*.

Tamar Sea Rescue:

This station is located at Beauty Point near the mouth of the River Tamar on the N coast of Tasmania more than 100M from SE Tasmania and mainland Australia. TSR does not conduct regular scheds. However, station coordinator Eddie Pridmore (✆0473 009 335; email: *training@tamarsearescue.org*) has kindly agreed to open the station from 0800 to 1700 hrs on the following dates:

Sat. 17th October 2020, Sun. 8th November 2020
Sun. 22nd November 2020, Sat. 5th December 2020.

Although TSR would prefer you to call at one of these times, you may be able to arrange in advance another mutually convenient time.

Dover Radio:

This station is located on the shore of Port Esperance some 40M S of Hobart. It is run by Jeremy Firth who has been the communications officer on the radio relay vessel for eight VDL-C cruises. He does not conduct regular HF radio scheds so you will need to make an appointment at a mutually convenient time.

His contact information: ✆0418 126 048; email: *jwfirth2@bigpond.com.*

Tas Maritime Radio:

This station maintains a continuous listening watch from 0700 to 1900 hrs daily on its network of multi-channel VHF base stations covering almost all the Tasmanian coast, and on HF frequencies 4125/6215/8291 kHz. The HF station is on North Bruny Island, some 12M S of Hobart. Their website is *www.tasmaritime.com.au*.
Contact information: ✆03 6231 2276; email: *ops@tasmaritime.com.au*.

To initiate the certification process, call Tas. Maritime Radio on one of the above HF calling frequencies, explain who you are and what you want, and the duty operator will take you to 4483 kHz (maybe via their normal working frequency 4416 kHz).

Please be aware the operator will be busy running their normal weather and calling scheds for approximately 30 minutes from 0745, 1345 and 1733 hrs respectively.

VHF Radios

Although there is no formal certification requirement for VHF radios, participants would be well-advised to check their VHF radio is operating satisfactorily. Participants will find not having a reliable VHF tranceiver considerably inconvenient, if not dangerous.

On past cruises, emergent VHF problems have included:

- corroded or otherwise faulty antenna connections,
- a faulty antenna,
- a faulty microphone – that has got wet or has otherwise been mistreated (microphones do not like being dropped or banged against anything hard),
- an incompatible microphone – having found a microphone is faulty, someone else's has been borrowed, or a new one bought, that is designed for use with a different model of radio (perhaps with an incompatible impedance rating).

Ensure your VHF radio is set to 'international' frequencies. Among the radio's settings, often this is denoted as 'I' or 'INT' or sometimes 'AUS'.

Chart List

You are well advised to have a set of paper charts and navigational tools (propelling pencil, rubber, dividers, parallel ruler or equivalent) on board. Paper is a lot easier to dry out than an electronic device; remember the latter will only work if you have electrical power!

The following is a list of navigational charts useful for Bass Strait and the Tasmanian coast. The full up-to-date chart list for the Australian region is available at: *http://www.hydro.gov.au/webapps/jsp/charts/chartlist.jsp.* In the list below, an asterisk next to the chart number indicates a new edition has recently been published.

For safety reasons, it is recommended that boats have a set of paper charts as well as electronic versions.

'Big-picture' charts for a perspective on the whole cruise are:

4644 (2010-09-24) Southern Ocean - Cape Otway to Cape Howe including Tasmania
487 (2005-01-07) Bass Strait

The following AUS charts are essential:

167 (2020-01-24) Port Dalrymple includes Bell Bay and Long Reach (Edition 2)*
169 (2005-01-21) Plans in Tasmania (Sheet 3) includes Georges Bay, Blackman Bay, Coles Bay, Schouten Passage
170 (2006-10-13) Mercury Passage
171 (2006-01-06) Hobart to Norfolk Bay
173 (2008-08-01) D'Entrecasteaux Channel including Little Oyster Cove
174 (2008-06-06) Plans in Tasmania South East Coast includes North West Bay, Southport, Recherche Bay, Port Arthur, Port Huon.
176 (2008-03-14) Port Davey, including Bathurst Harbour and Entrance to Bathurst Channel (Edition 2)
177 (2001-08-31) Approaches to Macquarie Harbour, including Strahan and Hell's Gate
766 (2007-04-27) Mistaken Cape to Wardlaws Point
767 (2007-01-19) Wardlaws Point to Eddystone Point
790 (2004-11-12) Stokes Point to Rocky Cape
791 (2004-11-12) West Point to Granville Harbour
792 (2008-07-18) Trial Harbour to Low Rocky Point
793 (2008-07-18) Low Rocky Point to South West Cape
794 (2008-08-01) South West Cape to South East Cape
796 (2008-08-29) Tasman Head to Cape Frederick Henry
798 (2003-02-21) Eddystone Point to Stony Head (Edition 2)
799 (1996-06-14) Stony Head to Rocky Cape

Additional essential charts for the Geelong fleet:

143 (2015-02-13) Port Phillip includes Patterson River, Blairgowrie, Mornington, Queenscliff, Sorrento (Edition6)
144 (2014-06-20) The Rip (Edition 2)
158 (2014-12-19) Port Phillip South and West Channels (Edition 2)

The following charts are recommended:

164 (1999-06-11) Approaches to Devonport (includes Ulverstone and Port of Devonport) (Edition 3)
168 (2002-10-04) River Tamar: Long Reach to Launceston
175 (2008-03-28) Spring Bay including Triabunna
178 (2015-12-18) Plans in Tasmania (Sheet 2) includes Approaches to Grassy Harbour, Grassy Harbour, Smithton, Currie Harbour, Wynyard, Stanley Harbour, Port Latta. (Edition 2)
179 (2011-03-25) Plans in Tasmania (Sheet 1) includes Franklin Sound, Approaches to Lady Barron, Whitemark, Waterhouse Passage, Foster Inlet. (Edition 2)
795 (2008-08-29) South Cape to Storm Bay

797 (2008-06-06) Tasman Island to Mistaken Cape
800 (2002-08-09) Furneaux Group (including Flinders Island)

Additional recommended charts for the Geelong fleet:
789 (2003-05-16) King Island
802 (2020-08-21)) Cape Liptrap to Kent Group. (Edition 2)*

Cruising Guides:

- *Tasmanian Anchorage Guide*, 5th Edition – the latest printing will be available gratis to VDL-C participants in their cruise satchel at the beginning of the cruise. Boats travelling to Hobart to join the cruise can obtain a copy earlier by contacting the RYCT in Hobart.
- *Cruising Southern Tasmania*, 5th Edition (February 2020) – from Wineglass Bay to Port Davey. Published by the TASMAP in conjunction with the Cruising YC of Tasmania.
- *Cruising North East Tasmania*, – a guide to anchorages and waterways from Wineglass Bay to Port Dalrymple, including the Furneaux, Kent, and Hogan Groups. Published by the Cruising YC of Tasmania (2017).
- Marine & Safety Tasmania (MaST) Boating Guides:
  - *South East Boating Guide*.
  - *East Coast Boating Guide*.
  - *Tamar River Guide*.
- *Cruising Tasmania* 2nd Edition by John Brettingham-Moore. This guide has been around for many years but is still a useful adjunct to more modern publications.

Anchoring & Berthing

Located as they are in the roaring forties, Tasmanian anchorages can be subject to sudden, more or less violent changes in the weather. Cruise participants are strongly advised to have at least two substantial, reliable anchors – at least two of them. The anchor size advised for its type and for the weight of the boat should be regarded as a minimum requirement.

The primary anchor warp should be all chain and at least 50 metres long.

It is desirable to have a workable system for reinforcing the holding power of your usual anchor. One oft-used procedure is to slide a substantial weight down the chain to keep as much as possible of the anchor end of the chain on or close to the bottom in stronger winds.

Another method is to attach a second anchor with around 2 metres of chain to the head of the first anchor. Then attach a light line loosely from the shackle on the shank of the second (leading) anchor to the chain just above the first anchor to make it easy to set and retrieve the second (leading) anchor. Expert opinion has it that such an arrangement has greater holding power than sliding the weight down the chain.

If you do devise such a system, make sure it works before you have to deploy it under battle conditions.

In some of the ports where visits are scheduled, boats will be moored to piles or jetties where there can be some surge. It is essential that each boat has an adequate fender-board. Such a board can be placed between fenders and a jetty pile. It is advisable that the fenders located between the board and the hull are close together, else there is a risk of any surge breaking even a very strong fender-board.

A minimum recommended size for such a fender-board is 120mm x 40mm and 2 metres long with a hole at each end for the ropes to hang it from the rail. The heavier the boat, the more substantial this board needs to be. Oregon pine or eucalyptus is the best kind of wood. It is better to have one as a part of the ship's inventory before embarking on the cruise. It is not always easy to find one at short notice.

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