

NAUTI

NEWSLETTER

Cruise News

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SOLITARY ISLANDS

Our dreams recently enticed us to commence exploring the Solitary Islands.

Named by Captain Cook from HM Bark Endeavour in May 1770, the Solitary Islands include five major islands and a scattering of smaller islands/reefs off the NSW coast between Coffs Harbour and Yamba. So they're very handy to *CatNirvana's* home, but they're also much more...

An article in The Brisbane Courier of 29 October 1863 provides an early glimpse of the Solitary Islands from a mariner's perspective. The article focused on marine lights and reported a process that may bring a smile to some of our Crew...



"...a select committee of the Legislative Council was appointed, to consider what new lights might be required. The terms of the committee's appointment referred to the whole coast of "New Holland." Why this antiquated and unsuitable geographical expression was used we do not understand, but the enquiry was practically limited to the east coast of Australia, and especially to that part of it between Sydney and Moreton Bay.

(cont. page 2)

ENJOY Flameless Candles



ENJOY Platinum Collection flameless, fragranced candles are the perfect way to add to your relaxation and pleasure, both on land and at sea. The realistic triple-LED flickering light and genuine paraffin wax combine with distinct fragrances to create a subtle and sensuous ambiance. As well as the safety of being flameless, ENJOY candles offer many convenience features ... a timer, 10yr LED life, no smoke or wax leaks & no need for replacement.

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There were seventeen witnesses examined, and though there was the usual difference of opinion as to details - for nautical men never agreed as to the proper position for lighthouses, there was a substantial accord...that three fresh lights were required between Port Stephens and Cape Moreton."

The article went on to report the Committee's view that one of the new lights should be on the Solitaries. It seems, however, that the "usual" mariners' differences of opinion were particularly evident in the question of whether to place a light on North, or South Solitary Island. South Solitary was eventually chosen because it was *"the more concealed danger...inasmuch as vessels going north hug the coast to avoid the current."*

Notwithstanding the above accord, the next step in the process was 10 years (!) later in 1873, when a(nother!) conference of the marine departments of the Australian colonies was held to discuss marine lighthouses...and it was then finally resolved that a light should be erected on South Solitary Island. In October, 1877 the Marine Board and the Colonial Architect proceeded to the Island to select the sites for the buildings. The lighthouse was completed in 1880 (17 years after everyone agreed it was needed!) at a total cost, including a jetty and landing stage, of £32,000.



Tales of the South Solitary Light construction confirmed the hostile sea conditions that justified its existence. Many vessels dragged their anchors or ran from storms; the crane at the landing was twice washed away; the cement shed and smithy were blown away; and an easterly hurricane washed water clean over the centre of the island, about 90 feet high. For such difficult conditions, the workers were well paid; on their return from the Island some of the men were considered 'rich' with labourer's cheques to £276 and tradesmen's to £360! (cont. page 3)



"The Opening"
North Solitary Island



"Southern Anchorage"
North Solitary Island

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In 1975 a light was erected on North Solitary Island ...



and both lights are now solar powered and fully automated, clearly marking the area for mariners approaching from any direction.

Thus began the modern era of the Solitary Islands for mariners; they stand as outposts with some refuge along the northern NSW coast, but best avoided seaward in difficult conditions or at night. While sailing past on *CatNirvana*, the Solitaries often appeared alluring and many reports of closer examinations of the islands sounded interesting. So on 9 February we embarked Yamba, bound for North Solitary Island as our first exploration of these NSW coastal outposts. North Solitary Island is ~30nm south-east of Yamba; ~26nm north-east of Coffs Harbour; and ~7nm east-south-east of Wooli. (cont. page 4)



EASY-SPROUT

Cruisers at all concerned with a balanced diet will agree that fresh greens can be a scarce and precious commodity for marine living. Happily, just as modern 12V freezers now produce ice (another previously scarce and precious commodity for marine living!) anywhere, a clever

invention called EASY-SPROUT™ now offers fresh greens, easily and anywhere!

With EASY-SPROUT™, you can grow fresh, healthy sprouts anywhere and keep them conveniently ready at your fingertips. The EASY-SPROUT™ system is proven over 20 years supplying its inventor with practical, effective, and earth-friendly fingertip gardens...and, like every Floating Impressions product, EASY-SPROUT™ is also used and enjoyed when cruising on *CatNirvana*.

Features of the EASY-SPROUT™ system include:

No external energy is required as heat from sprouting seeds circulates fresh, humidified air by natural convection;

No water is wasted as the circulating humid air prevents suffocation and dehydration and NO rinsing is needed; and

No BPA is used (Bisphenol A...a compound still used in plastics, but now considered a toxic substance by many western countries) because the system is made of durable, easy-to-clean, quality food grade HDPE.

Fresh sprouts are ready when you need them with the three-part Sprout Keeper™ model that includes handy refrigerator storage and thus allows a constant supply of fresh greens for your table...anytime and anywhere.

The whole system is simple and economical.

Tasty green sprouts can be ready anywhere in 8-48 hours. This is truly the easiest sprouter ever. The EASY-SPROUT™ is perfect to make your cruising lifestyle healthier and more comfortable!

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MEDIA RELEASE



BLADEFISH WINNER

We are delighted to announce that Rachel from Naremburn was the winner of our BladeFish Prize Draw! Rachel and her family, including Rosie-the-Mermaid and 5 yr old Joe, were overjoyed with their prizes...

"We have been really enjoying the Blade Fish and have taken it into the sea and into many pools...(M)y daughter Rosie, and even my 5 year old son, Joe ... have been zooming underwater for hours... Thank you so much for transforming Rosie into a real mermaid..its the next best thing to a tail ! Happy sailing."

Thanks so much for letting us know Rachel! We invite all of our readers to check out the Blade Fish and other fun 'Man Overboard' products, many of which are currently on sale at attractive prices to assist you to explore and discover your own dreams of underwater fun!

Mooloolaba Marina to experience an EXHIBITION with a DIFFERENCE.

We will soon embark on our Winter 2013 Exhibition Cruise and we are delighted to confirm our first major Exhibition will be at Mooloolaba Marina 21-25 June, inclusive. We are very grateful to Mooloolaba Marina for the invitation to Exhibit at this premiere Marina where *CatNirvana* will fit nicely alongside many, exquisite cruising vessels. Once she is converted to a 'floating gallery' for the Exhibition, however, *CatNirvana* will also bring something completely new and exciting to the Marina!

So we invite all of our readers and everyone in the Mooloolaba area to join us at the Marina. We look forward to inviting you aboard and welcoming you to beautiful, fun and interesting displays of our wide range of products, all proven in the harsh marine environment of a true 'blue water' cruising vessel, but also ideally suited to cruising in comfort anywhere, whether on land or at sea.

Continuing Floating Impressions' commitment to supporting the communities where we exhibit and as a sincere 'thanks' for their great services to mariners, 5% of Mooloolaba Exhibition sales will be donated to Coast Guard Mooloolaba.

The Exhibition on *CatNirvana* will be open from 10AM to 4PM from Friday 21 June through Monday 25 June.

So welcome aboard...come EXPLORE, DREAM & DISCOVER!!!



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North Solitary is one of the largest in the group

No doubt both its size and its prominence for vessels approaching from the north influenced the decision to install the automated lighthouse on North Solitary. North West Rock, ~1nm north-west of the 'main' island, is clearly visible approaching from the north. North Solitary itself is actually split with a narrow channel (The Opening) between; appearances suggested, however, the opening may only be navigable for very small vessels...and even that might be suspect with any sort of sea on the eastern side of the Island! The Island is heavily (and noisily!) inhabited by bird life, with the usual crowds of gulls and mutton birds common to the area, but we also spotted one large – We guessed ~1m in height -- and very impressive bird. Sadly our primary camera was out of operation for this exploration so we didn't capture any good images of the big bird. Our Field Guide to Australian Birds suggests we were looking at a white-breasted sea eagle, but we would be delighted to hear from any of our ornithology-inclined Crew/readers

who might be able to shed some further light on that magnificent large bird? With nor'east breezes, we stopped for the night on the western side, just south of the Southern Anchorage, where we were well sheltered from both wind and seas by steep rock faces climbing up from the waterline. Due to other plans, our visit to North Solitary was short and we embarked the next morning.

The Solitary Islands are located where the southbound warm waters of the Australian East Coast Current meet the cool, nutrient rich waters that originate further south. So the waters around the Solitary Islands are unique for their ability to support both sub-tropical and temperate marine life communities, both plants and animals. The unusual bio-diversity makes the area particularly well known and loved for recreational diving and fishing.

Vessels approaching any of the Solitary Islands will be entering the Solitary Islands Marine Park & Solitary Islands Marine Reserve (Commonwealth Waters). All activities within the Park, whether

commercial or recreational, are subject to the various usage zones within the Park.

For cruising yachts, the Park restrictions are no problems whatsoever... and they are accompanied by well-maintained National Parks moorings! Moorings are provided at Northwest Rock, North Solitary Island, South West Solitary Island, Split Solitary Island; and South Solitary Island. We are told the moorings can be quite busy during peak season, between charter fishing and dive vessels (both commercial activities allowed, with permits) but the Islands' distance offshore and the number of moorings suggests that spare moorings should usually be available. Anchoring is also permitted, although not in clearly marked Exclusion Zones. So these solitary outposts are well set up to accommodate visiting cruisers.

We will definitely explore the Solitary Islands further, hopefully with more time and some fishing gear!

