

REGATTA

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE GOOWLA REGATTA YACHT CLUB

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It has been a difficult year and as we approach its end we look back at the challenges placed before us. As in the past we have rallied to the challenges and I believe will be stronger for it. The next year is full of unknown obstacles for us to overcome and we won't know how difficult the water situation is going to be for some time.

By the time you receive this edition of *Regatta* we should have confirmation that the Goolwa Lock will be open to boating from late December until the end of January at least. With some obvious controls, affected by weather conditions and water levels around the lock chamber.

We hope to also have a decision on the placement of a temporary barrier, probably at Clayton, which will allow the Goolwa channel to be topped up with fresh water and maintained by flows from Currency Creek and the Finnis. This is by far the best result we can hope for as it will avert a major environmental disaster and allow boating to resume as normal as possible in our area.

Our sailing and social calendar is very full and we will continue to come up with new ideas to help ensure that you derive as much enjoyment from your membership as possible.

We have carried out a substantial degree of dredging along the northern shore behind row C of the marina and have dredged the area from the boat ramp to the main channel to a depth of approx 1.5 m depending on the wind. We also extended the boat ramp and launching and retrieval has never been so good; something good always comes out of a bad situation. This has ensured that when water levels return we will have the marina in first class condition.

I would like to thank my fellow flag officers and our general committee members as well as the numerous volunteers who participate in various sub committees and the organisation of functions. Also our sponsors who, despite these trying times, are continuing to support the club; thank you all.

A very safe and merry Christmas to all and let's all look forward to a very happy and safe new year.

Don't forget the Christmas twilight races. I look forward to seeing you around the club and on the water.

Kind Regards
Keith Parkes
Commodore



Commodore Keith Parkes with Flag Officers; Vice Commodore Linda Mills and Rear Commodore Don Richardson

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Steeplejack crew cheer the Commodore and GRYC

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REPORT FROM THE REAR COMMODORE

I remember the day well. Just before Christmas 1994. Christine and I had relocated to Sydney with our daughter Anna just 4 months earlier. I was trying to explain that Australia was a land of opportunity and that our 14yr old's glass really was half full. Of course she felt her world had just ended on that flight from the UK and that her glass was not even half empty; it had suddenly just about drained dry!

Today the club faces many challenges most of which, in one form or other, relate to the extreme low water levels we have been experiencing over the past few months. The marina may look depleted of boats, and the jetty's a subterranean forest that has suddenly emerged from the waters, but our glass is anything but empty as sailing continues undiminished. Our first Twilight Series, sponsored by Goolwa Jetty Builders, was a great success with an average of 18 boats on the water each night and between

60 and 70 crew members participating.

WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO OUR YOUTH TO PASS ON OUR SAILING SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

The lower water levels have helped define the channel which has led to fewer rather than greater groundings. The racing has been as competitive as anything we have seen in recent years.

As a variation to our usual classification trailer sailors entering our second Twilight Series have been segregated into 'Spinnaker' and 'Non-Spinnaker'

boats providing some spectacular scenes as kites fill on the downwind leg.

What then of the future? By the time you read this newsletter our worst fears may be over with a long-awaited announcement by the State Government that immediate action is to be taken to restore the river level by the end of January. If not, then we will continue racing just as long as it is still safe to do so. Even if the level drops a further 500mm our only limitation is likely to be our ability to launch and retrieve. The club anticipated this scenario and undertook major dredging operations in late September when the boat ramp was extended a further 8m providing a launching depth of 1m.

We have been planning for the future in more ways than one. At the end of November I had the pleasure of formally thanking the ladies of Pt Elliot CWA for their donation of \$2,000 towards the establishment of a junior sailing programme. I believe we have an obligation to our youth, and to the sport in general,

to pass on our skills and knowledge, after all how many of us got into the sport when we were teenagers? The gift from the CWA will facilitate the establishment of junior sailing without imposing a financial burden on the club. It is my intention, in the New Year, to offer young people between the ages of 11 and 18, preferably with a basic knowledge of sailing, the benefits of a YSA coaching programme.

In the last edition I appealed for volunteers to assist in Race Management and am pleased to report that John Bruce, Paul Goode and Julie Brentson have come forward and are now actively involved with Rick managing our race programme. Our race organisation is stronger for their input. Finally, also as part of the club's risk management policy, I have been assessing our skill needs and am pleased to report that the club has funded the training of 5 'Senior First Aiders'. Next on my list is the establishment of courses for VHF Radio Operation and Power Boat Handling. Please register your interest to participate in these programmes by emailing the club.

Don Richardson
Rear Commodore

PS: Amendments to the International Yacht Racing Rules come into effect on 1st January 2009. Copies of the 'Blue Book' may be obtained from Murray Symonds at Capt Sturt Boat Supplies.

Maybe you would like to be involved?

The 2009 SA Wooden Boat & Music Festival is well into the planning stages and the Committee is looking for volunteers. If you are interested please contact Lyn Roberts on 85550815 for further details.

EDITORIAL COMMENT - POWER TO THE PEOPLE

Are there places in the world where the sea level is rising and where local agriculture and tourism adapts to increasing salinity, falling river levels and climate change? Are there places where a disappearing river system occurs and little or nothing is done about it? Naturally there are many answers to these questions. The Danish island of Samso in the Kattegat, an encroaching inlet of the North Sea, is in many ways a coastal location that has experienced problems comparable with Goolwa and the Lower Murray - an encroaching sea!

The lower Lakes and the Goolwa basin are a mess. For long years nothing has been done about it. Water levels have fallen by almost two metres in the last two years with consequent salinity and almost 90 per cent reduction of the number of boats moored at the GRYC marina. Local industry and tourism are under threat. We are still told that pumped river water will save the lower lakes when we know that no water is available. Who believes these stories and who cares? At the club's opening day ceremony much was made of the Federal Government's responsibility for Goolwa's plight. This appeared as another classic example of passing the buck. At some point responsibility for effective problem solving at a **local** level has to take place.

The Danish island of Samso provides a fine example of how local people turned round a dire situation. Last year, global carbon dioxide reached a record figure of 384 parts per million, a rise of at least 35% on levels that existed before the 20th century. The Intergovernmental Panel on

Climate change has warned that such changes will soon have a most dramatic impact on the world's weather patterns, for example, on the diminishing rainfall in the Murray Darling basin. Already Arctic and Antarctic sea ice is dwindling alarmingly and scientists say the world has only a few years left to make serious carbon output cuts before irreversible climate change ensues. Was there evidence of climate change on Samso and is there evidence of climate change in Goolwa? Samso's solution could be Goolwa's!

Everywhere on Samso you see signs of change. There are dozens of wind turbines of different sizes and solar-paneled roofs. Giant turbines in a long line off the island's southern tip swirl in the sea breezes. Does Goolwa and Hindmarsh Island experience sea breezes that could drive wind turbines? Plantings of salt resistant plants and shrubs have taken place providing vital wind breaks and contributing to elimination of acidification. Local towns on Samso (comparable with Goolwa, Victor Harbor, Port Elliot, Middleton) are linked to district heating and cooling systems. These are either powered by rows of solar panels covering entire fields (and they have much less sunshine than Goolwa). The point is that none of these enterprises have been imposed by outside government or funded by major energy companies. Each generation plant is owned by a collective of local people or by individual islanders. This is a pilot project to show the world what can be done. Could Goolwa have a pilot project to manage increasing salinity to "show the world what can be done?" Does it require local initiatives rather than

waiting for Government (sic) to act? The Samso revolution has been an exercise in self determination, a process in which islanders have decided to demonstrate what can be done to alleviate climate change, cope with rising sea levels while at the same time maintaining a rewarding lifestyle. Is a Samso type transformation possible for Goolwa and the Lower Murray and is Samso an example of just how *local* people can solve the current problem of the disappearing river and lakes? At the moment no acceptable solution is in sight and in reality nothing is being done. Nothing! At least we can surely have an informed debate to start a process of renewal - see Ted Dexter's article!

Solutions to Goolwa's problems will likely be diverse and conflicting. Individuals' self-interest will likely trigger conflicts - even if this hasn't happened already? However, achieving satisfactory water levels in the Goolwa basin, adjusting to increased levels of salinity, developing local wind turbines, solar panels, local desalinization plants if necessary, and drought and salt resistant plantings along the estuary will not be easy. Endless meetings will be needed to get things started. However, so many community issues and interests are at stake that developing a local Goolwa and GRYC based plan is surely the way to proceed. Everyone in GRYC and in our local community knows someone who is interested in solving the decline of the river the lakes and the town. A solution starts with a few people, witness Randal's sterling efforts. It just needs time to spread. That is the real lesson of Samso and could well be a model for Goolwa.

Editor

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CLUB PROFILE - JOHN A BLUNDEN

You have to learn to sail with your eyes closed, that's the ultimate test!" So says John Blunden when talking about his early experience of sailing both heavyweight and Australian lightweight Sharpies. In view of his recent Twilight race success at the helm of *Dolphin* the same maxim applies; 'being able to sail with your eyes closed'. John moved into sailing as a young lad because; "I was too disruptive at Sunday school!" As a teenager John's many sailing achievements were in Sharpies which he raced for 40 years till 2000. The six metre racing Sharpie 'carries a crew of three with a seven metre mast and fully battened mainsail and spinnaker'. John in his early racing days was the forward hand on the trapeze though he has also been the skipper. "When we were racing Sharpies we would sail out off Glenelg and put up spinnakers in the dark. That's how I learned to sail and race." Sailing at Glenelg Sailing Club was the focus. To begin with John sailed in two person Holdfast trainers. But John also came to sail at Goolwa every Easter and soon came to know the waters of the Lower Murray as well as anyone. John's first recollections of Goolwa go back to 1949/50 when he was nine years old. In those days the heavyweight Sharpies were loaded onto trailers and semi trailers and the Holdfast trainers stored inside. John got his first heavyweight Sharpie in 1953. By the mid 1960's, sailing with Keith Chaplin, John was winning state and national Sharpie titles competing against and beating the likes of James Hardy, John Bertram and John Cuneo. In 1955 sailing a heavy weight Sharpie John won the Glenelg Centenary Cup.

John Blunden has a forty year plus history of involvement with and commitment to GRYC. As club history indicates many plans for GRYC were hatched at weekends at Bill Appleby's shack at the *Snake Pit* on the Coorong. John makes clear that discussions at that shack helped develop the plans and constitution for GRYC, based then on John's knowledge of the Glenelg Sailing Club constitution. It was most innovative at that time as provision was made for women to become club members of GRYC. Along with his longtime friend Geoff Byrnes, John walked the river banks at Goolwa and chose and marked out the GRYC present site above Armfield slipway. As a renowned licensed builder John laid the slab and bricks for GRYC weekend after weekend – volunteer craftsmanship and labour unheralded. The plaque high on the wall above the racing winners' boards identifies the role John played in the building of GRYC. In so many ways GRYC's existence is based on the commitment, professional skill and generosity of John Blunden and his colleagues. Club History (Carless 2004) shows that John was one of the original seventeen guarantors providing \$1000 per head security for a bank loan to build the club. From 1966-68 John was; a member of the general Committee of GRYC, became Rear Commodore in 1970, from 1971- 75 was principal sailing officer, and from 1977-79 was Vice Commodore.

There are many distinct events and achievements in John Blunden's sailing career. In 1960 John got his first lightweight Sharpie which was the second "off the line boat which Chips Barclay had started building. In 1962 John saw an old derelict boat that had fallen off a trailer at Chips Barclay's Patawalonga slip. She had broken planks & ribs and a keel that was coming away from the bottom. The yacht was NANIEYA a Tasmanian boat from Derwent with huon pine hull to the waterline and spruce above. The general opinion was that NANIEYA was not worth restoring. Rather, "only fit for burning!" John had other ideas. He had bought the boat for "60 pounds three shillings and nine pence!" Ever creative John's first job was to cut out the 1468 lbs of lead keel. He sold it for scrap for more than he



Nanieya - The Blue Boat - John Blunden at the helm

paid Chips for the boat. Geoff Byrnes located a flitch of Karri at Oodnadatta and railed it to Mile End. When John saw the flitch he could not even pick up one end. It was 18ft long so SA railways lifted it onto a flat rail truck and sent it down to Goolwa for 50p! With endless perseverance, allied to dedicated craftsmanship John rebuilt NANIEYA. She was ready for sailing and racing by 1969. NANIEYA (often referred to as *Blue Boat*) was the third boat in the Milang-Goolwa race with the registration Number GR03. Previously the inaugural races had been between Bill Appleby's *Esther* GR01 and Bill Ballard's *Edith* GR02. NANIEYA had many fine races and won the Goolwa-Milang-Goolwa back to back race in 1978. This is significant not only for John's achievement but it was the last time the Regatta race was run from Goolwa. John won the vintage river boats race in 1979 and again in 1991 then known as the Armfield Cup. Always candid, never with his head in the air, John is a master yachtsman and a stalwart of GRYC. John's touch of genius when sailing is never dramatic. That's not in his nature. Early on John Blunden had ambitions for GRYC, and few have made such a telling and generous contribution, to the club's growth and success. John Blunden's candor, legendary skill as a yachtsman, his commitment and friendship are a cornerstone of GRYC.

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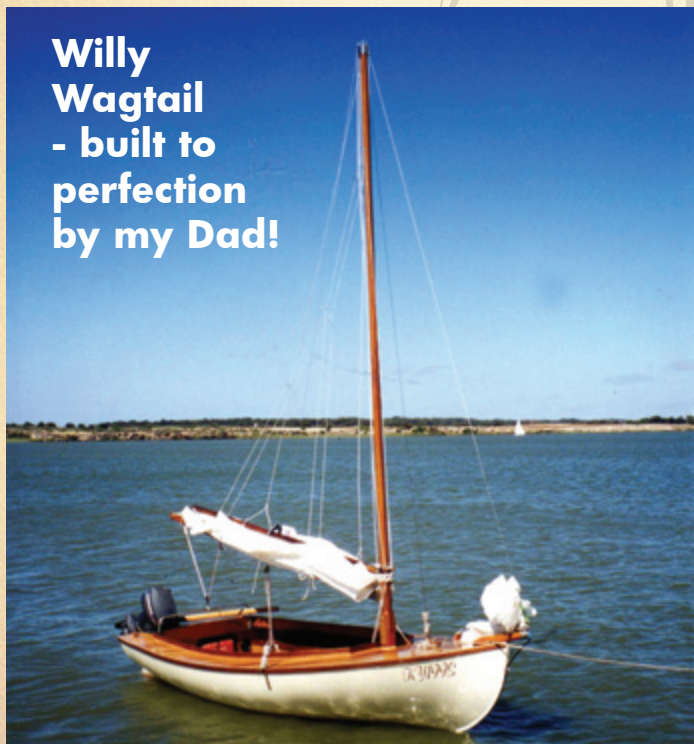
WILLY WAGTAIL TO WELLINGTON

W*illy Wagtail* (see photo) is a 16ft cold moulded, gaff rigged Spartina, with white dacron sails, and a swing keel, built to perfection by Leigh Muller – my dad! Willy Wagtail is Dad's baby! *Willy Wagtail* is seen most Easter times sailing on Lake Bonney. The motor hanging off the transom is an 8hp two stroke Mariner.

We wanted to at least have one last sail across Lake Alexandrina to Wellington. We thought we would have only a few occasions left as the water levels fall further and further. We sailed on Sunday 2nd November leaving GRYC at 8.00am. Down wind to Laffin Point we had a gentle 5 knot NW wind and managed, using a jury rig, to fly our spinnaker. It was safe to do this but since we couldn't quickly de power *Willy Wagtail* we pulled down the spinnaker beyond Laffin. *Willy Wagtail* could easily take in too much water if suddenly our spinnaker pulled us over. Being overpowered was too risky on the open waters of the lake. Sailing now with the working jib, we reached Clayton by 9.30am. Sailing north of Rat Island in still gentle breezes we avoided the shallows and cleared Stony Point by 11.30am. Off Point Sturt the wind, veering from NW to SW all day, increased to 12knots. We sailed well north of the channel markers 88 and 92 on Alexandrina. It is very shallow on the south side of the lake. We had multiple gybes as Dad at the helm adjusted *WW* to the winds and sailed us safely across the lake to Pomanda Point. We saw no other boats all day except for two distant commercial fishing boats. At Pomanda Point we pulled up both rudder and keel to avoid shallows and hazards. While the channel up stream to Wellington is well marked, there are hazards in the form of unmarked partially submerged posts. We reached our destination a little after 4.30pm at the Wellington Caravan park ramp upstream of the marina. Mum was there with the trailer to tow us home. I survived the eight and a half hour crossing on "Time Out Bars." It had been a memorable sail.

Sam Muller

**Willy
Wagtail
- built to
perfection
by my Dad!**



AN OPEN APOLOGY

This is an open apology to all the people that I gave hope to in regard to the raising of the water level around Goolwa by Xmas. I'm sorry if I and my associates encouraged you to keep mooring your boats in the lower river or keep your property with the belief that as a community we could overcome all the hurdles and inaction from all levels of Government.

We tried to get enough water in the river to get the lock chamber to operate for this Xmas summer season, hundreds of emails, letters, meetings, talking to politicians and phone calls but once again the negative action groups cry and threaten the loudest, it seems everybody knows a lawyer who will work for nothing just so they get their names in the paper or respect from their peers or what ever it is that motivates these people.

I couldn't have believed that trying to create something positive out of a total disaster, which our end of the river is, could generate such negativity and in some cases outright hostility. We gave it our best shot, some of the people we have been working with in government departments have been fantastic and enthusiastic about trying to achieve a positive outcome; I thank them for their efforts.

To the people who have lost their jobs or are about to I probably gave you guys and girls false hope and along with everything else that's happened your outlook is a bit bleak, hopefully one day something will happen and if you don't come back to this once wonderful place at least think of us occasionally.

To my friends who I have bored relentlessly about this town and what should happen, I'm sorry. Some of you were right, in this state everything just seems to take longer and cost twice as much.

Once again to anybody who I gave hope to about being able to tackle this problem as a community and achieve a positive outcome I'm sorry we wasted your time and efforts.

Randal Cooper
Goolwa Masts and Welding
Capt. Sturt Marina
Liverpool Rd. Goolwa SA 5214
Ph. 0414 552 038 Fx 08 8555 0075

**Gone is the natural boom/bust
cycle of the Murray; of mere trickles
or bumper flows, when the river
acted like a bellows pumping water
across the floodplain and then
reclaiming it, enriched.**

Alastair Wood
*Of Billabongs and Broken Dreams:
Tales of the Murray River*

REGATTA

GOOLWA WATER - SCIENCE, POLITICS & RELIGION

We have had 38 consecutive months of below average inflow into the Murray.

The water salinity is now at +50% of sea water levels at the Goolwa Barrage and increasing upstream. We already have an increasingly salt system.

The water level is at least 500mm below (varies with wind conditions) sea level and dropping further.

We have sulphidic soils in Lake Alexandrina, Lake Albert and Goolwa increasingly turning sulphuric as they are exposed to the air.

Alexandrina Council are calling for fresh water to be released from the Murray system to save the Lower Lakes and have opposed a State Government application for sea water in "emergency" to prevent the Lower Lakes from going further into environmental collapse. Maybe we are already in emergency.

Water was made available within a week in the electorate of the State Minister responsible for the Murray River, when it started to be ringed by dead fish.

The history of decisions and management is long and ignoble and to revisit further serves little purpose.

The future is our responsibility and in our control.

Even if politicians protest that God is responsible for rain "I'm not God I can't make it rain." Hullo!

We need now to get over the past and self interest and start managing on the basis of No Water coming down into the lakes, if it does then it's a bonus, just like rain.

We have no shortage of well intentioned "experts" and political opportunists all coming up with solutions or obstructions that address their areas of interest without coming to terms with overall the

inevitability of what is happening and the need for a broad long term management framework that immediately addresses critical environmental, social and economic issues. The Precautionary Principle.

We face, with the current management strategy:

- Hyper saline (much greater than sea water) and increasing with evaporation.
- water levels below sea level and greater than 1.5m below (State Gov trigger to let sea water inflows) below particularly given Council's opposition. We will in all likelihood, in the very near future, be able to lower salinity by letting sea water in.
- Sulphuric soils with the attendant sulphuric acid and environmental destruction and hazards.

A further divided community which will bring true the "divide and rule" management strategy that seems to work so well in avoiding effective action.

Ted Dexter

HOMAGE TO BAKU

*It's hardly wise to generalize
About a yacht or person
But Baku is a well sailed yacht
As tough as ancient Samson*

*Across the Lake and back again
To Wellington flying their kite
Spinnaker flying as Murray wills,
Till Pomanda comes in sight.*

*Who dares to say it can't be done
To return to Goolwa unscathed
Through narrow channels marking posts
At times too shallow to bathe*

*Early start this October morning
From Wellington Marina they glide
It's sail or nothing for them both
As motoring they just can't bide.*

*Now Denise is intrepid,
As a long reach sails,
Baku's tipped onto her side
In strong winds she prevails*

*By mid afternoon with gentler winds
They clear Rat island and Clayton too
Negotiate dog leg river bends
Till Hindmarsh bridge comes into view*

*"I know you Denise you're quite a girl
You're always resolute when sailing,"
Now they've sailed across the lake and back
But it's Baku they are hailing.*

RJR



REGATTA

GREETINGS FROM PORT MORESBY: RACING ON A 36ft FARR

Well some months have passed and Brian and I are well ensconced in Port Moresby. We arrived in late June which was about half way through the sailing season. We joined the crew of Racketeer, a 36ft Farr, which we used to race against when we were here in 2005 and 2006. Brian took on the role of lead foredeck hand and I on head sheets, keyboards and other cockpit duties.

Port Moresby's Fairfax Harbour is ideal for sailing and boating with a number of islands and reefs providing interesting courses and cruising destinations.

The Royal Papua Yacht Club (<http://www.rpyc.com.pg/index.htm>) has a number of divisions, one of which is the Sailing Division which runs 4 classes of sailing/racing: Pee Wees (junior sailors); Hobies, A Class and Trailer Sailer and Small Yachts (TSSY).

A class run a number of series of races: 2 inshore series, a long inshore series, an offshore series and a range of other regattas (such as the remembrance regatta) and novelty events (not the lady's helm, stern chaser, lady's helm, single handed, double handed etc).

Recently we sailed in the last of the off shore races, a 140 nm sail around the Vari Vari Islands north of Port Moresby. Within 30 minutes of commencing the race, despite light conditions, equipment failure saw the head of the #2 part company with the snap shackle on the halyard. The spare halyard was unusable due to problems with the block and sheave. So before we parted the protection of the harbour for the open ocean, we rigged the bosun's chair and sent a crew member to the top of the mast for repairs.



Louise on Farr 36 in calm waters around the Vari Varis

With the head sail re rigged, we exited the outer reef and headed north to the Vari Vari Islands. It was very pleasant sailing, with blue skies and a moderate swell. Shortly before arriving at the Vari Vari Islands we landed a good sized Mackerel.

Conditions continued to soften as the light faded and we gently sailed along the coast, now inside the reef, back to Fairfax Harbour and the "Yachty". After a series of tacks to clear the final headland, we crossed the finish line shortly after midnight – a 14 hour race. At this point the wind died almost completely and our main competition drifted on for another hour before crossing the finish line.

Louise Edwards and Brian Smith

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PORT LINCOLN WEEK - REGATTA 2009

The Lexus Adelaide to Port Lincoln 156 nautical mile yacht race, South Australia's premier ocean race, will be held for the 59th time starting on Friday February 20th 2009.

This will be followed by Lincoln Week Regatta held on beautiful Boston Bay from Monday 23rd February to Thursday 26th February. The 2009 Regatta includes "fleets for IRC, Cruising, Multihulls, Trailables and J24's". Lexus Lincoln week is a great regatta. In 2008 six GRYC yachts were trailed to Port Lincoln: *Nerana, Dolphin, Baku, Steeplejack, Wind in the Willows and Bohica*. In seven races Randal Cooper skippering *Nerana* was again a winner! Hopefully more GRYC boats will participate in 2009.

Registration forms can be found on the Port Lincoln Yacht Club website www.plyc.com.au. Lincoln Week is a very well run regatta, backed up by the opportunity to sample some of Australia's finest sea foods and wines; all grown and caught locally. Crayfish, prawns, oysters, abalone and mussels just to name a few. All of this washed down with fine Eyre Peninsula wines. It is well worth the trip itself.

Come and Join us!

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