



'Circumnavigation of Australia in *Manutai*'
A presentation by Jeremy Gormly, 24 May 2023
Report by Stephen Thomas

Attendance at the Cruising Committee's speaker evening on May 24 was outstanding, with 152 members and guests gathering to hear Jeremy Gormly's unique story. Our CCA was incredibly lively after the event, with 120 people staying for dinner. Guests included many of the crew on Jeremy's Buizen 48, *Manutai*, who sailed on various legs of the circumnavigation, as well as owners of sister ships to *Manutai*.

Guest speaker Jeremy Gormly and CD Chairman David Henry



The above chart shows the track of *Manutai* in the circumnavigation of Australia. A highlight of the cruise included a stop in Yamba where they met Kay Cottee. Continuing to Cairns, Covid travel restrictions were imposed, making it impossible to proceed, and the boat was delivered back to Brisbane to wait until authorities lifted restrictions.

Setting out again on May 7, 2022, they retraced their steps, then journeyed around Cape York to Thursday Island and through Torres Strait. The next leg was the crossing of the Gulf of Carpentaria approximately 324 nm to Gove, and afterwards through the spectacular Gugari Rip, otherwise known as 'The Hole in the Wall'. Travelling across Arnhem land, they stopped on traditional lands (requiring a permit) and anchored in Trepang Bay. They lost an anchor, which, fortunately, was temporarily replaced in Darwin.

Reaching the Kimberly region, they first travelled 14nm up the spectacular Berkeley River. The fishing was outstanding, providing the crew with plenty of Sashimi. Wildlife was abundant during the cruise, spotting sea snakes, sharks, turtles, crocodiles, whales and dolphins.

The next stop was King George River, the site of a spectacular waterfall and aboriginal rock art. Unfortunately, disaster struck in the form of a broken starter motor, leaving them no engine. Luckily they were towed out of the river by the tender of a cruise ship. Sailing to Broome without an engine, they narrowly missed a reef while drifting in no wind and then at Broome drifting onto a fish farm. Thankfully, they were finally towed into the Cable Beach anchorage for repairs to the starter motor.

The next stop was the Abrolhos Islands (Pigeon Island) which was the site of the wreck of the



Batavia (a Dutch East Indies ship and the massacre site of the crew). While continuing to travel down the west coast, their stops included Geraldton, Fremantle and finally rounding the great southwest corner of Australia, Cape Leeuwin, which marks the separation point of the Indian and Southern Oceans.

Following stops at Augusta, Albany, Esperance and Lucky Bay, Jeremy crossed the Great Australian Bight sailing solo to Port Lincoln, before continuing to the SA Cruising Yacht Club in Adelaide. Here, at Christmas time, when no services were available, club members very kindly rebuilt a critical broken traveller block. Leaving Adelaide, they visited Victorian ports, including Port Phillip, before crossing to one of their favourite places, Deal Island, part of the Kent Group in mid-Bass Strait and finally directly home to Sydney.

The final slide of this presentation was a chart of the voyage statistics, including:

- A total time of 384 days not including a Covid gap of 314 days.
- Travelled over 8,700 nm
- 4 solo passages including 670 nm passage across the Bight.
- Stopped at 21 marinas and 9 moorings (anchored for the remainder)
- 14 provisioning and 11 fuel stops.
- 145 days underway.

This was followed by a lively Q and A session and a round of applause.



The Kent Group. Dover & Erith Islands from Deal Is.