



**OPPOSITE PAGE** One of my current flying machines! Yes, still some work to be done but plenty of dream materiel here! It is a Kitfox Classic IV on Aerocet amphibian floats and may fly soon?

**LEFT** Me and some excited kids (my Hobart neighbours) about to experience the "real world" in a \$500 Mirror dingy I picked up locally. More exciting than immersing themselves in an iPhone for Christmas maybe?

**BELOW LEFT** In 2010, 17-year-old Mike Perham (at left) from the UK stopped in Hobart halfway through his solo voyage around the world, attempting to be the youngest to do it. I sent him up for his first ever trial instructional flight and suggested he try to become the youngest land, sea and air solo circumnavigator. He got the sailing record (removed later by Jessica!), has now driven solo around the world, has his full pilot's license and is currently after a plane sponsor!

# Merry Christmas... I'm Crazy!

CRAZY – PATSY CLINE SANG IT, DON CONTINUES TO DO IT. WHAT'S IT LIKE? DON LOOKS AT THE LITERATURE AND DECIDES IT'S JUST LIFE

**O**kay, so I own three big boats and a Mirror sailing dingy, two flying machines, lots of remote-control toys including a submarine, plenty of teddy bears and I often only wear my undies when I am out treasure hunting! I am a free thinker

and admire nonconformity in most of its forms and tend to be over creative with my ideas, actions and dreams. Apparently, that means I may be "crazy".

There is this "thing" called the DSM-IV (*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*), that for the past 50 years has been changing the

way the world looks at you and me. Doctors will tell you it is a "diagnostic tool" for a variety of "mental illnesses".

Hmm? To my mind labelling free thinking and nonconformity as a mental illness is not a good thing but that happens with the DSM.

This DSM-IV is updated as new research points to new

discoveries. When I was a 10-year-old there were about 130 mental disorders. Fifty years on, thanks to these new discoveries, there are now around 357 varieties of mental illness and most of the new ones relate to children!

Is society just getting too clever about some things?

Maybe we should all just get out on the water! Some of these new so-called "mental illnesses", now with so-called "symptoms", embrace arrogance, bipolar disorder, above average creativity, cynicism and antisocial behaviour. In my time these were just "personality traits".

These "sufferers" were some of my mates with colour in their lives that you just got along with. They are now diseases, treated with drugs? It has been claimed that if Mozart were born today he would be diagnosed

with ADD and medicated into "barren normality".

## LONELY BETTY

Over the past few months I have been trying to find two young Australian sailors to send off on a two-year *Voyage of Imagination* around the world. It was to be a grand adventure and significant challenge, engaging different cultures and sharing the experience on social media.

I provide the boat and all the gear. They buy their food. We put the word out via boating media and social

media exposing that news to an estimated 400,000 hits. I reckon that may have translated to around 200,000 boating people hearing about it. Most of those eligible and interested in Australia should be aware of the opportunity.

With just a few days left to apply it looks like *Betty*, the Tradewind 35 I bought for the expedition, may be staying put. To date we have only received three formal applications to go, from kids you would be proud to call your own. I have spoken to many more answering

questions but after careful consideration, most decided the challenge was too great or their experience levels too low. Indeed it is a big challenge.

Nonetheless, I wonder if this opportunity were offered 40 years ago how many applicants we would get and by today's standards how many of those would have been considered crazy!

Let's hope I get a last-minute rush of applicants. Then again maybe the *Voyage of Imagination* is just another of my crazy ideas?



**LEFT** Some thought I was "crazy" in 1984 when I decided to build the second biggest yacht moulds in Australia. I went onto make 24 of these 15.2m yachts with the same hull design as my BOC Challenge solo around-the-world race entry. I spotted this one, *Interlude*, in Tonga this past season while treasure hunting there. They have sailed her all over the world!

**BELOW LEFT** Crazy? I found this sub in 2003 in a warehouse in Cairns... so wanted to buy it!

**BELOW RIGHT** Following another six months in Tonga, *ICE* is now back at Vuda Marina, Fiji, on the hard for cyclone season. I am now in China "dreaming". Still no significant "treasure" after four years but next year may be the big one... LOL, so yes I am crazy!



**ABOVE** A few weeks ago while in Tonga, our neighbours *Hokule'a*, the voyaging canoe from Hawaii, departed Nuku'alofa for Waitangi, New Zealand. They first visited there 30 years ago and are now on a three-year 50,000-mile circumnavigation. It is an epic adventure testing the sailors physically, mentally and spiritually. Read all about it at [hokulea.com](http://hokulea.com)

**LEFT** High-tech sailing canoe *Hikianalia* is 72ft x 23ft, solar powered and built in Auckland in 2012. She is part of the Polynesian Voyaging Society and sailed to Hawaii first to join as escort with *Hokule'a* in its circumnavigation using traditional techniques. It was exciting to see both in Tonga. Yes all these crew may be crazy too but what a grand adventure! Next stop after NZ is Sydney early 2015.



Anyone want to buy a hardly used Tradewind 35? Or maybe I will sail it solo non-stop around-the-world in the 2018 Golden Globe Race. Hrrm...

### IXMAS?

When I want something or need it, I usually get pretty excited all of a sudden, do some research and go get it. eBay is getting bigger in my life and if I do not actually buy off the web, it is the main source of research before that decision. Christmas presents are always a challenge!

One of the boats I bought many years ago I sailed only once. It was to be an

inspiration for the neighbours. These kids were a lot of fun yet had never considered the concept of "sailing". One was 10 and the other 11. Without saying anything I went out and found a used Mirror dingy, a \$500 bargain. I put it in their driveway and knocked on their door, suggesting it was on permanent loan so I did not frighten them. It was theirs to use as they wish.

Steve Jobs the creator of the iPhone has basically changed the world, but he would never give his kids an iPhone! Here is his opinion and I quote: "If our current addictions to our iPhones and other tech

is any indication, we may be setting up our children for incomplete, handicapped lives devoid of imagination, creativity and wonder, when we hook them onto technology at an early age.

"We were the last generation to play outside precisely because we didn't have smartphones and laptops. We learned from movement, hands-on interaction, and we absorbed information through books and socialisation with other humans, as opposed to a Google search.

"Learning in different ways has helped us become more

well-rounded individuals - so, should we be more worried that we are robbing our children of the ability to Snapchat and play Candy Crush all day if we don't hand them a smartphone, or should we be more worried that we would be robbing them of a healthier, less dependent development if we do hand them a smartphone?" he asks.

### HAPPY BOATING

There was a huge smile on the faces of my neighbour's kids when they realised they had a boat. We all headed to the beach for a quick spin! Then in quick order they

named it, cleaned, sanded and varnished it, applied vinyl decals, joined a sailing club and learnt about a whole new, fascinating world with many new friends. It was exciting for me to watch!

They grew up and a couple of years ago I got the little Mirror back. Now it has gone to another great little kid in another suburb who is sailing toward new horizons.

So before you rush out and buy your kids, (or someone else's kids), that new high-tech gadget see if you can find a little boat? Steve Jobs is a smart guy right! Herons and Mirrors are still around for

about \$600!

### FLYING & SAILING

Are you a sailor who wants to know how it all works or a speed demon who wants to go faster? I am what aviators call a frustrated flyer! I love it and wish my log book had many more hours than 350. I never get enough time to fly as life keeps getting in the way.

Sir Francis Chichester was a famous sailor/flyer and I am always surprised at the number of sailors who fly. I have spent time in gliders, ultralight trikes, fixed-wing three-axis "normal" planes, helicopters, gyrocopters and

even parachuting, just in case. Something I discovered a long time ago when learning to fly, the Basic Aeronautical Knowledge theory course has a definition of what makes sails work and how to make them work better. A sail and a wing are the same thing, right? It's all about lift, drag, high and low pressures, airflow over surfaces etc.

I guess if you are on a wing-sail foiler or have a carbon fibre boat, I am telling you to suck eggs! But if you are just an everyday sailor like me, then go get some information about flying and you may just go a little faster! Or worse,

end up in a whole new world and take up flying. Light sport aircraft are the way to go.

Have fun and enjoy the holidays, a great time to take what's called a "trial instructional flight". Yes you can go flying without a license right now. It's better than any flight simulator or computer game... send your kids? A great Christmas present.

It is real, does not cost a lot and you take the controls for about 30 minutes up in the other "big, big blue".

For now, I'm off to Antarctica again with the Russians this season... Merry Christmas! ■