

It's a worry . . .



OH!, I THOUGHT YOU WANTED ME TO CLEAN UP WHITE COLLAR GRIME.



TYPING THIS WAY I'LL ONLY GET TWO-O-SYNOVITUS



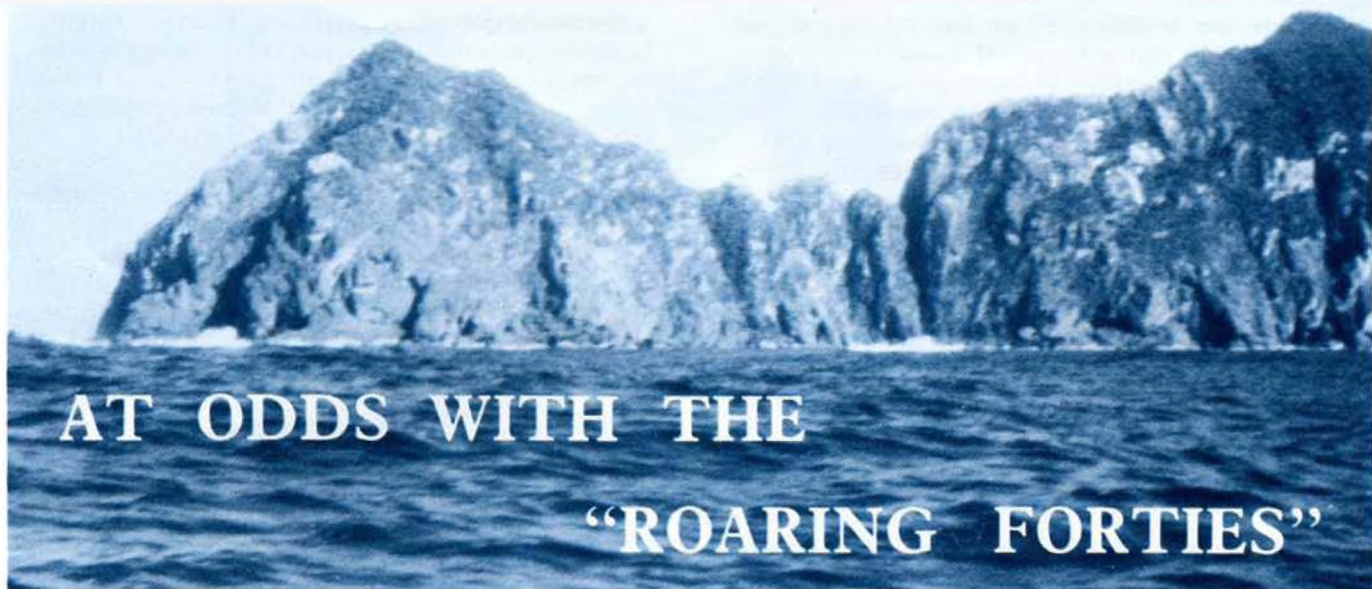
WE'VE HAD A BUDGET INCREASE:- AN EXTRA SHOE STRING !!



YES M'AM, FOOT PATROLS HAVE STOPPED ALL VANDALISM IN THIS AREA



?!?!



AT ODDS WITH THE "ROARING FORTIES"

Senior Constable John Harding, of Tasmania Region, recently made a rare visit to remote Port Davey, in the island's South-West. He tells here of his adventure.

IT is not every day that one gets an invitation to sail to Port Davey.

It is accessible only by sea or on foot. There are no roads.

It can be one of the most inhospitable places on earth. The 'Roaring Forties' see to that. Once you are there you may have to wait weeks to get out again in a small boat.

But we knew that and it presented a challenge. So four of us set sail after adequate preparation, which included the latest in lifesaving gear (liferaft, E.P.I.R.B., etc.) and 30 dozen stubbies under the for'ard bunk. The other bunks also had some food under them.

We departed the Bellerive Yacht Club in a stinging northerly on 3 January in 'MERINDA' a twenty-eight foot Herreshoff ketch owned by Andrew Gates, a local tugmaster.

The blow developed into a full blown gale and forced us to shelter the night on Bruny Island. What a start!

The next day found us beating into a stiff southerly which abated in the evening and allowed us to round the beautiful south coast of Tasmania during the night, with prion birds playing hide-and-seek with our forestay.

Although it is only about 100 km. from South East Cape around to the West Coast, there is nowhere to shelter in between if the weather closes in. Early afternoon on 5 January saw us safely in Port Davey, to anchor in Casilda Cove for the night.

Our other two crew members were teachers. One of them also was an ornithologist and one of our objectives

was to check the numerous islands in this area for endangered species of birds.

We never sighted an orange-bellied parrot, but it was fun trying.

We walked/climbed many miles and landed on a few islands where maybe white man had never set foot!

One crew member was more than an accomplished cook, and we ate exceedingly well. But then seafood was abundant and you can hardly make a mess of preparing fresh crayfish and a cask of Riesling.

We sailed up the Melaleuca Channel at night using a flounder light — quite a trick as the channel is only about 10 metres wide in most places and very shallow.

Such was the standard of seamanship of the other crew members that we flew the spinnaker when we sailed north, back out of Melaleuca! I am told it's a first and probably worth an entry in the Guinness Book of Records.

There are spectacular beaches and waterfalls. The landscape generally is not unlike Norwegian fjordland as it consists of ancient drowned valleys and glacial moraines. There is a one-man tin mine at Melaleuca with a light aircraft strip to service it and travellers in distress.

Weather forced us to abandon an attempt to climb Federation Peak, so 8 January found us in a charming cove with a jetty, a disused fisherman's cabin, garden and a workable generator (hot bath!) which also attracted 'Sea Dawn', a sister ship from home. It was its skipper and his wife's 25th wedding anniversary.

There were now nine of us and we wine and dined par excellence with live music (we found an accordion) and danced and sang the night away. We even learned how to bake beer bread.

We were lucky with the weather and decided to opt out on 14 January, as a 'low pressure trough' was approaching across the Bight.

It was a wise move. We just made it and bought a 'dusting' coming home up the D'Entrecasteaux Channel. So much so that we had to lie up at South Bruny.

Morning of the 15 January found us looking like a Taiwanese fishing boat with all our gear hanging in the rigging to dry, wet and miserable after our night's run.

However, all's well that ends well, we had an idyllic trip home up the river next day, finishing our last carton as we tied up at the marina.

I was thrilled to have been where not too many have ventured and I would recommend to anyone to put an opportunity such as this at the top of the list if ever they get the chance to visit Tasmania.

