

A SALIENT LESSON FOR SAILORS

Not only were there ladies at the Club learning boating skills on Saturday; I learned a good lesson on Sunday – one which should have been self-evident.

After the frostbite race on Sunday, I helped a keelboat to relocate from H jetty around A jetty to the next causeway. This was a simple task to connect a rope from the bow of the yacht to the stern on my powerboat and tow it around the corner.



All went well until we were running along the causeway between A jetty and E jetty. As we progressed, I moved towards A Jetty and the yacht towards E jetty. The consequence of this was that the stern of my boat, the towing boat, was pulled towards the centre of the causeway and my bow was aimed at boats penned on A jetty!! After a bit of manoeuvring, we disconnected the tether between the two boats and the yacht continued on the short distance to its pen while I motored off in the opposite direction – the direction I was facing by the time we had untied the rope. No harm done.

Something that is conspicuous, when you pause to think, is that yachts are designed to continue on a course and defy the efforts of the wind (or a rope attached to their bow) to change their course. So when any yacht heads towards the port or starboard of a towing boat, it will pull the stern of the power boat in that direction with far greater effect than a water skier would have. This results in the towing boat heading further away from the course that the yacht is taking!! Even my boat, which has a big keel for a power boat of its size, is not designed to hold its own course with the level of stubbornness of a yacht.

So the lessons we learned from this:

If you are a power boat towing a yacht – stay directly in front of the yacht;

If you are a yacht being towed by a power boat – follow the towing boat and don't choose a different course.

Ensure that the tow-rope can be released quickly in case things go wrong.



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