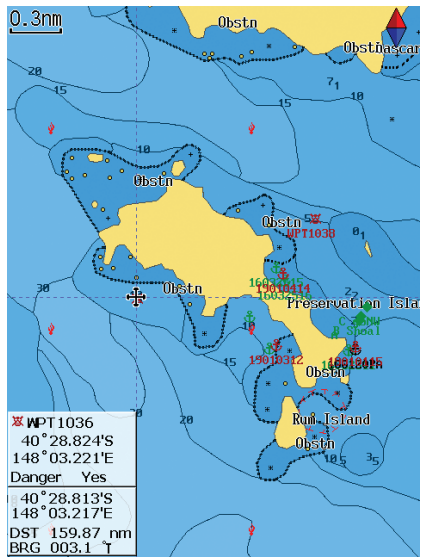


LETTERS  **LETTER OF THE MONTH**



LEFT: Chartplotter waypoint made of the danger.

ABOVE: Aply-named Preservation Island.

UNCHARTED ROCKS

WHAT all sailors dread: fog and uncharted rocks.

At our second morning anchored in Bass Strait's West Bay we explored Rum Island while a bank of fog sat low on the far distant west horizon. When it began drifting closer we packed away our toys and boarded *Banyandah* for a run back around the island. We have visited this area a number of times and know its shores are encumbered with off-lying rocks, so we are cautious.

Not very long after lifting our hook and clearing the first point going north, which has some above water rocks jutting out from it, the fog closed in surprisingly quick. In no time at all vision past the bow of our ship was diminished.

I (Jack) was at the helm and made a turn to be well clear of the farthest rocks shown on our GME chartplotter. At the time, we were in 15 to 18 metres depth under keel and well outside the danger line.

Reducing speed, both of us peered forward, talking glibly about the change of weather, when all of sudden Jude yelled, "turn hard left now." As I did so, this huge granite boulder came out of the thickness. At the same moment the sounder started to plummet and my heart began to race. Instinctively I made a waypoint.

Minutes later, the water deepened and the drama ended. Twenty minutes after that, the fog passed, leaving us with the question of "What the ...?"

Looking back, there was a whole string of big rocks extending out from Preservation where nothing was shown on either of our plotters. Both use C-maps cards issued 2012 and 2005.

We notified the Australian Hydrographic Office and its response follows at the end of this letter.

Understand, we are not trying make a case against the chart makers; we are doing our job of passing on local knowledge as sailors have since the beginning of time.

That said, we are perplexed. In 1798, Matthew Flinders did a crackerjack job of charting these rocks, why are they not on today's charts?

Reply from Hydrographic Office: "overall, I would very much like to thank you for bringing this to our attention in such a well-documented way via a Hydrographic Note.

Based upon your advice, we have already updated the official electronic and paper nautical charts, though it could be two years before those changes are reflected in the unofficial recreational charts – another challenge we are attempting to address."

We wrote back and suggested if they choose to name those rocks they call them 'Jude's Fright'.

JACK AND JUDE BINDER



WIN!

WITH GROTTY YACHTY CLOTHING

Submit your letters to the Editor and be in with a chance to win a Tee from Australia's own sailing brand. This month's winner should phone 0411 271 387 to claim their prize!