

Aboard Sengo

December 2014



The start of Summer....

December had us sailing north back to Pittwater for some cosmetic works and biding our time until New Year's Eve. Christmas was spent secluded at the end of Smiths Creek in Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park.

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Jackson

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Everybody's favourite
subject!

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Two Things I learnt in December....

1. As when whipping cream (see earlier report), it is a good idea to have the receptacle you are pouring boiling water into in the sink in case of unexpected bow waves. Failing this it is a good idea to have ice-blocks ready for a medical response!
2. Tropical thunderstorms are really good for cleaning the deck (and saving you scrubbing on your knees).



Heading North again

Having waited the first couple of days in December in Manly for favourable conditions, and none being forthcoming, we eventually decided to brave the wind direction to head back to Pittwater. We got as far as Sydney heads before we discovered the fix we'd done on the line to the sail a couple of days before didn't take, and the top of our sail was flopping straight down. It was a sad sight and I was embarrassed to see someone take a photo of it as we limped up Middle Harbour to find some protection. We were able to prize some time and service out of the local rigger who retrieved the car at the top of the mast and provided us with some line to try again. He was not familiar with square top sails and really didn't have any time for us anyway so were grateful for what we got but he did suggest that three half hitches, whilst not ideal, should temporarily solve our problem. So again we fiddled with the top of the sail ready to depart.

The next day however was not conducive to sailing north so instead we headed off to Balmoral Beach, walked along the foreshore,

enjoyed a burger for lunch and then wandered off to the shops for what I thought would be a short stroll. Short it may have been if I'd taken the right road but it was all up hill and we mistakenly arrived at Mossman hot and exhausted. When we got back down to the beach we made sure we went for a swim to cool down.

We finally bit the bullet on the 4th of December and sailed north with a mild northerly blowing. We knew we were going to have to sail out at a considerable angle and distance (as we were looking at doing the trip with only one tack) but because we had contractors in Pittwater waiting for us we didn't want to muck up their timelines too much by delaying our departure any longer.

We reached the heads and put the auto-pilot on for bearing 72 degrees. In theory this should have us travelling North East at a fairly wide angle. In truth, Sengo was facing North, but moving South. We had found our way in to the East Australian Current; which we knew existed close to the coast but wasn't

expecting it quite that close. We did end up far enough out to get to Barrenjoey Head in one tack (and once we did tack we were joined by a pod of dolphins as if to confirm we were finally doing the right thing). We have since been told it is probably

quicker to do many tacks closer to shore on that particular stretch – next time we will. This little exercise in navigation also had the wind picking up and we ended up reefing the sails. We supposedly got to 9 knots in 14 knots of true wind speed (we still haven't had the instruments calibrated). I think this is comfortably the fastest I prefer to travel (as the true wind speed actually got to around 18 knots on the nose and I found this to be most uncomfortable – apparently however, if the wind is behind you it is a completely different story.

Plumbing

We've finally got our new black water holding tank! It has only taken 5 months. Sengo was delivered with an undersized holding tank in the starboard side (half the advertised capacity) so we decided we'd put our foot down and insist on getting what we'd paid for. The brochure said there was 170 litres total capacity so that's what we were expecting. (The original brochure also said 1000L of water capacity and we very nearly got only 780 before we picked this up during

the build but ended up paying for the extra 220L tank).

We managed to get an even bigger tank than we were expecting in the allocated space (paying for the extra capacity) and so now have a brand new, Australian made, solid tank (with an inspection hatch that is not going to leak (see earlier 'Aboard Sengo').

However, a leak somewhere in the shower system emitting water into the bilge has not yet been solved.

Cushions and Covers

Our premeasured cushion bases arrived whilst we were waiting for the holding tank to be installed. Finally, I could sit on the outside benches in carefree comfort, without having to carry out the old cushions that I'd brought with us from our previous life. The templates for the backrests were drawn up at this time and collected a couple of weeks later.

Having slotted into the schedule of the contractor we'd engaged to do our covers, we finally got to a point where we were both in the same location and

the process from start to finish was surprisingly quick. In our case 'covers' is a bit of a misnomer as there is very little 'canvas' in our design (the canvas is synthetic) and they are designed to keep the bugs out and encourage light in rather than 'cover' Sengo up for privacy





The Emperor has new clothes....

...effectively doubling our useable daily living area

The social life of a Yachty

The life of a 'yachty' is regularly portrayed as one of a social butterfly, with 'sundowners' every night –often with different groups of people. Up until now we have been reasonably self-contained but we have finally started to mix with the yachting/boating community and have met/socialised with more yachties/boaties in December than we have in the past months since

July. The owners of one yacht, we discovered later, are regular contributors to one of the internet cruisers forums we subscribe to and I delight in finding out where they are when they provide comment (last known to be in Tassie). The others were delightful locals; one of whom offered us the use of his usual mooring for New Years Eve.



What is this?

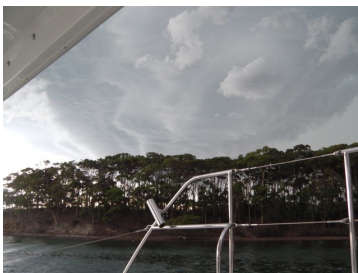


We have no idea! The best we can come up with is some sort fan to clear soil above submarine cables. Alternatively it could be a university project. Either way the tug towed the giant looking fan around the entrance to Manly for around an hour before the impending storm put a stop to all activity and it was put back on the barge..



Clouds

I have been reminded in December, more so than in previous months, that Sydney is essentially in the tropical zone. Storms have become a frequent evening event and thunder and lightening have sometimes been severe. As a result I have some great cloud photos. These no doubt would have been more spectacular taken on the better quality camera but I as yet have not had time to pull that out and relearn how to use it. The below photos should however give you some idea of how spectacular these events have been.



New Years Eve 2014

Having dismissed the idea of spending NYE on Sydney Harbour some time ago with my assessment of the parking/anchoring habits of the locals, (I wasn't prepared to risk the boat) we ended up in Pittwater to wish farewell to the last of 2014.

Thanks to the generosity of a local we spent New Years Eve on a mooring just north of Saltpan Cove. This not only gave us a view of the higher fireworks that were a feature of the Pittwater Celebration (the lower ones were blocked by a headland), but also a great view of the smaller fireworks display at the northern end of Scotland Island. The wind played its part and had Sengo pointing north so we could sit on the back seat (our back porch so to speak) and comfortably enjoy the show. Our tinnie currently has no lights on it so we couldn't have travelled to and from any fireworks locations legally (and more importantly, safely) in the dark anyway, so we were very grateful.



Cats and Birds

One would think that with cats on board, that the opportunities for interaction with birdlife would be somewhat curtailed. Any scientific reading will inform you that the smell of a carnivore (albeit usually secreted on vegetation) will discourage native wildlife from crossing the

path of the offensive odour. However, our latest experiences lay claim to a dispute of this theory. Not only have we had Silver Gulls, Swallows and Pied Cormorants sit



on the lifelines with little care in the world (one with a cat creeping up on him), one swallow had the audacity to enter our back tent door, sweep past

Cilla, head through the cabin door, circle inside (much to Tiger's surprise) and then make its way out again. Whist I certainly don't advocate putting ashore your carnivorous pet on National Park land, I can't see the logic of (and will clearly dispute) the request by Parks of having no pets in vessels.

