

Aboard Sengo

March 2015



Northward bound

Hot, cold and humid days

The saying about Melbourne goes: "if you don't like the weather, just wait a minute". March gave us really hot, really cold and some quite humid days. But on average the temperature was dropping so...eventually we started the trip north to warmer climes.....

Finishing tasks

Our final adventures
in Melbourne

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Anchoring

In theory it is
supposed to be easy

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Kathump!

When feathers meet
Dacron....

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Melbourne

The first week of March was taken up with friends, medical appointments and lining a farm dam.....

Damn Liner! A decidedly non-aquatic activity.

One of the reasons we didn't leave Melbourne at the end of February was because we were asked to help line a small farm dam. The dam in question had a history of leaking and an earlier clay liner hadn't worked so the owner decided to try a 'plastic' liner instead. This pre-cut-to-size lump of material was delivered prior to our arrival and our first task was to roll it out ready for its concertinaed unfolding. The day was drizzly, the ground muddy and between five bodies and a small excavator we got finally the job done.

Moomba

I hadn't been to Moomba for years and as the Festival weekend was filled with catching up with friends (who are far more important) we didn't plan a visit. However, on the Monday night, when we were alone again we decided we'd head in for the final fireworks. Andrew had read that [Hoodoo Gurus](#) were playing before this so we arrived early enough to hear the show. It was a smallish



stage and a smallish but very appreciative crowd. At a guess I was in the younger percentile of the group (minus a few sub-teenagers who were clearly here with their parents). Some devoted fans sang along to every song (I admit even I could actually remember a few versus). It is scary to think how long ago these guys were first on the scene. We saw them play for an hour and it was terrific. After that, the fireworks were a bit of a fizzer really (although we did watch the ones along the river rather than the higher display in the park). We then watched the final of the ski boat jumping on the Yarra River. I was surprised they were allowed to continue this competition in the dark at first until I realised the night jumps were an event in themselves. The final came down to two of the top international competitors – an American (Freddy Kreuger (yes, that is correct)) and a Canadian (Dod Ryan). Freddy won. I haven't yet worked out how to capture photos of this. (Results are at [Moomba Night Masters Finals](#))

On the way back to Sengo at the giant Fox screen at Southbank we spent a few minutes watching the final stages of the ICC Cricket World Cup 33rd Match between England and Bangladesh. Broad went out for a nominal score and Bangladesh bowled England out. Terrific stuff!

The Little Library

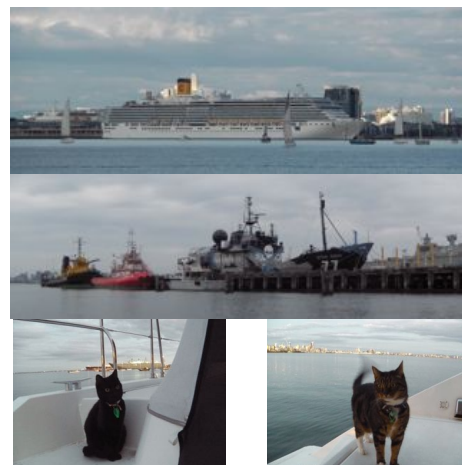
The Melbourne Central Little Library is essentially a free library/book exchange in the centre of the Melbourne CBD, located in the buildings above Melbourne Central Railway Station (not far from [Coops Shot Tower](#)). The 'Library' is essentially a wall of books, in no seeming order and open to the main walkway. Each book is stamped as the property of the Little Library and asks you to take a book and either return it or replace it with another. I took six books in and exchanged them as there had been a shortage of laundrettes with books in them for a couple of months.



Williamstown

We finally bought a television – a small one – and the plan was to head back to Geelong to anchor and settle down to watch the F1 Grand Prix. However, we'd been advised that the signal may not be all that good in Geelong (from someone who currently lives there) so we picked up the mooring back in Williamstown (across the Bay from the race). As we'd not planned this too far in advance we only had a standard indoor aerial (with no time to organise a proper unidirectional one) and so we did the best we could with a swinging target. Practice and Qualifying sessions were interrupted by black screens and 'lost signal' notifications on a semi regular basis with longer 'lost signal' interruptions as cargo ships passed us to head up (and

down) the Yarra. We did however have access to the original sound effects – although from this distance the cars weren't all that loud – but the F18 fighter jet was horrendous. This fighter headed across to do his display above the racing circuit from above us (I assume he came from Point Cook but I could be wrong) and his normal sound was loud but when he did his flyover for the Grand Prix crowds – well – there goes the eardrums.





Cleanliness is next to Dogliness

Sengo had finally got a good mopping (the first all over one) and a hose out of the cockpit areas before we left Yarras Edge Marina. We were surprised how much dirt had accumulated on her deck but put this down to being in an area with building construction (coupled with the advent of a major dust storm on the 28th February). However, once we'd been on the mooring at Williamstown for a few days (these moorings are listed as 'short stay' but time and possession are ambiguous as the internet says you can't book them but the mooring directs you to book through Parks Victoria) we found that Sengo was dirtier than ever. Of course we were opposite the new dock works so assume this was a contributing factor. Work is also happening on what appears to be the sister ship to Canberra and we know possible pollution comes from here (Someone may have managed to have an accident with the oxy welder one night – there was a strong smell of fire in the air and a distinct plume of smoke coming from that direction).

A walk to Newport

After an 'enforced' stay on the boat over the Grand Prix weekend I was getting a bit of a craving for some exercise so suggested a walk in Williamstown. I had expected, after tying up the tinnie to Fergusons Pier that we would take a left hand turn past the Hobsons Bay Yacht Club and walk to the info centre at Gem Pier. However, I found we went right instead. Andrew was on a mission; to get a new set of anodes for the props. The place he needed to buy them was in Newport so that's the way we headed. We did however follow an interpreted walk/bike trail, past Stony Point Reserve and past where ships used to wharf to offload bulk oil and fuel for the Commonwealth Oil Refinery Company (later BP). The original wharf was built in 1922 and later extensions were added to 'service Caltex and the Victoria Ammonia Co.' In the 1960's Caltex had built a pipeline to transport fuel from their new facility at Corio. The wharves eventually fell into disrepair and a small section is maintained by the Melbourne Port Authority as a reminder of the area's history. The track along the river here is closed at night and the notice says you are entering it at your own risk. All a bit disconcerting really. We found the place that sold the anodes and it turned out to be owned by someone Andrew used to work with. A bit of sweet-talking got us a lift back to Williamstown.



From Williamstown to Geelong



Yacht Racing at Geelong (You Yangs in the background)

The trip down to Geelong was done in remarkably good time, (taking less than 4 hours to get to the channel), but the wind speed had increased to a reasonably rough 30 knots apparent and we had to hand steer it all the way. Trying to drop sails between two channel markers in a 1.5 meter chop was not pleasant, the starboard genoa sheet managed to get caught in the main sheet and a batten broke, tearing at the fraying sleeve again (at the end of this exercise the batten sleeve wasn't the only thing that was fraying!). Struggling to get the anchor down in vengeful

winds, we twice failed to pick up a holding at the Geelong Baths – and we twice failed on other side of the bay as well. We decided to head for Limeburners Bay (not Point) but on further reflection of the depth turned around (mid shipping channel) and headed back to where we had just made the second round of unsuccessful attempts. Finally we managed to get a holding but it was only 50 or so meters from port channel mark. In all this bouncing around I discovered the bridle clip had come loose and was hanging out front of the boat in the water - it took some creative

thinking to get it back. Exhausted, I slept for an hour whilst the southerly change had come in so it was now time to move back to the Baths. We took a further four attempts before getting a holding (and breaking the plastic bit of new bridle clip). By this time it was 645pm – thank goodness I had put a precooked meal out to thaw. A glass of red wine and dips didn't go astray either. (We found out later that our earlier attempts at anchoring had been in 40 knot winds!)

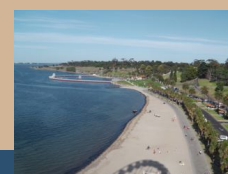
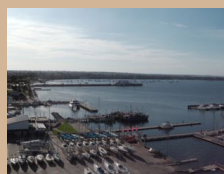
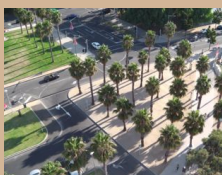
The reason we had come back to Geelong was to be in a relatively protected area for the boat whilst I tried to complete my diving certification. (started last year). I hired a car from Europcar (gaining a discount because the car I wanted wasn't available) and drove from Geelong to Carnegie one morning and Geelong to Portsea the next (via the Queenscliff – Sorrento Ferry). I think I needed a bit more time to get back into the swing of things and a few changes to my gear between Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning had me a little anxious. Subsequently, I didn't quite make it so will organise to complete the certification somewhere

further north up the coast (where it might just be a bit warmer!). Whilst we had the car, I asked for an extension for the Monday and made a 4-hour return trip to collect the mail – as I knew my prescription glasses had arrived as well as our new credit cards (and we weren't certain where (or when) we could next get our mail forwarded). I can now see and now spend! Unfortunately, whilst asking for an extension to the car hire, I didn't confirm the rate and the guy had the cheek to charge me full price (for a bigger car that I didn't originally want). As a result I won't use Europcar again

Before leaving Geelong we did another load of washing (\$5 at Bay Linen), replaced the batten (the one that had broken in the winds getting to Geelong), and fixed the pulley to the back of the tinnie davit system (the plastic around the cleat kept coming off the previous one and therefore losing grip so we have replaced the system with the next size up). I also popped into the Info Centre to see if I could find out where the old limeburners kilns are (see February's 'Aboard Sengo' newsletter). Unfortunately, the assistant I spoke to didn't know herself.

After a final shop and an enforced wait for the weather, it was now time to leave

As commiseration for not getting my diving certificate I convinced Andrew to take me on the ferris wheel on the Eastern Beach (we had talked about going on the Melbourne Star whilst we were in the CBD but never got around to it). The Giant Sky Wheel is supposedly the largest travelling wheel in the Southern Hemisphere. (although the website says the 'largest, most spectacular Ferris Wheel that the Southern Hemisphere has to offer,' I guess they weren't banking on the Melbourne Star)

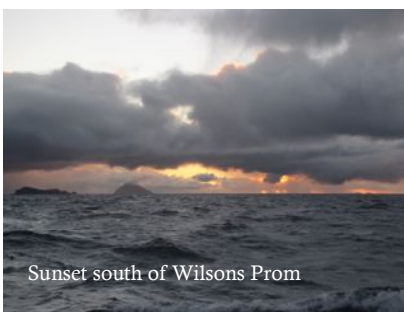


From Geelong to Eden

We left Geelong at around 3.30pm on 27th March and, as we were heading into the wind, motored towards the Port Phillip Heads. It got dark before we got to Queenscliff so the challenge was to negotiate the (correct) channel markers, as all sorts of channels and hazards have markers on them at the bottom end of the Bay. The preferred plan (going straight across the largest section of the shipping channel before deciding on a final exit point) was aborted because the pilot vessel asked us to keep clear of himself, the tanker Goliath (which we'd seen a few times whilst we were moored up at Williamstown) and a 'deep drafted vessel' (the name of which we weren't given) and we were that focussed on keeping out of the way that we didn't have time for novelties like looking up the vessel's name on the screen. So, Plan C was to keep to the west of the west shipping channel (in much shallower water) and hope not to hit anything. The weather situation wasn't ideal either – the most uncomfortable ride over a bar is an outgoing tide with an incoming wind (and with that we had a 1.5 to 2 metre swell).

This was supposed to be slack tide! Of course this was all also in the dark! I remember February 13th when we entered Port Phillip Bay. We couldn't see a thing then either but at least it was calm. Bring on Pea Soup I say (see February's 'Aboard Sengo' newsletter).

We cleared the heads at around 10pm and at about 1 nautical mile out decided it was time we could 'comfortably' turn east, only to be called up by the pilot vessel again wanting to bring a tug in. We were approximately between the tug and the heads and we weren't sticking around in these conditions for longer than we needed, so instead of heading south to go around the back of the tug, we upped the revs and passed in front of it instead.



At about this time we got a phone call from the Coast Guard on call at Hastings wondering if we were safely through....This was 10pm – talk about efficient as we said we would be heading out on the 9.35 slack. Granted he couldn't see the PP Heads from where he was but was he expecting perfect conditions? None the less, as he'd rung us it meant we didn't need to ring him so we could focus our attention on continuing on - in choppy seas!

Six weeks in relatively smooth conditions (minus a couple of notable incidents) meant that the cats had lost their sea legs (and in the conditions we stared in I don't blame them) with Tiger throwing up twice on the floor. The poor bugger cried every time we entered the cabin and I felt really sorry for him. I was out of practice as well, so whilst I'd put rescue remedy in the main water bowl, I hadn't put litter trays in the extra places. Cilla just hunkered down on our bed looking miserable.

Of course, it wasn't only the cats that had lost their sea legs and not long after the water police called me at 2am (according to their system we were overdue (clearly, we'd just left)) I found myself prostrate on the back of the boat heaving over the stern (there was no other safe way to do this as Andrew was asleep, it was in the wee hours of the morning, and it was rocky). It really took the next 48 hours to get the feeling out of my stomach (or was that my mind?)).

We had inadvertently given ourselves a challenge for this leg. Whilst Andrew is an experienced sailor used to multiple day passages, I was a novice at single overnight runs on the way down to Melbourne and we decided that on the way back north we would do Eden in one go. This meant three overnights in a row. Fortunately, most of it was sailing (even though some of this was around the 3 knot mark) but from 9pm Sunday to 12pm Monday we spent the majority of the time motoring.

As we started from the Port Phillip Heads in the dark our body clocks were a bit out and I am not sure

Oil Rigs

Our first encounter with Oil Rigs on this trip was at night but then we ended up sailing through the second cluster in the middle of the day.

Oil Rigs are curious beasts. From a great distance they look like ants standing on the water's surface.



Coming closer they start to look like mechanical monsters out of science fiction movies and then ...



close up they are quite a disappointment, looking more like high-rise shanty-towns in some backwater Asian city.



mine recovered for the entire leg.

We logged on with Sandringham (Coast Guard Melbourne) who apparently put us on an electronic system, and asked us to call into Coast Guard Paynesville 24 hours later. This we duly did and got the same request again. Once the second call had been made, Coast Guard Paynesville asked if we could then call into Marine Rescue Eden at 9am the next morning to give them an update of our position. We finally 'logged off' (or thought we did) just after lunchtime on Monday. I got a second call from Sydney Water Police at 2.30pm telling me we were overdue by 64 hours! The system is broke somewhere (bearing in mind, my emergency contact was called after we'd 'logged off' in Melbourne on 13th February). We can't complain too much as the system is run by volunteers but clearly some more training is required. In theory it is a great system, and I'd rather they err on the side of caution (ie someone will ring to see where you are) but you can see how

frustrating it can be and why some travellers don't use it at all.

Warm weather and a beautiful blue sky greeted us as we turned into Two Fold Bay. Arriving into Cocora Beach (near Snug Bay), we were serenaded by the familiar sound of the bell miners as we put the anchor down. And the rhythmic wash of the waves against the beach lulled us into an aftersail daze.

We didn't see a lot of wildlife on the trip; a few shearwaters, a few dolphins, one basking seal as we got to Two Fold Bay, oh, and the ODD Albatross (see page 10)

After three nights of pre cooked beef stew I was looking forward to something different and after taking the afternoon off we headed off to the pub for dinner. Talking to the locals we discovered there'd been a recent fishing tournament here (The Eden Open Invitational Game Fishing Tournament); some had been more successful than others, and one woman pulled up a Marlin she couldn't tag (it came up dead because it had been eaten at by Leather Jackets (Australia's version of piranhas).

I was desperately looking for a solid 8-plus hour deep sleep

(sleep had been in three hour tranches for the overnight watches) and a deserved sleep-in. Unfortunately, Andrew hadn't turned off his alarm so the phone went off at 3am! So much for an uninterrupted sleep. The 31st March was a magnificent day. We however spent it doing domestics. We visited the Eden laundrette (\$4 and \$3 machines) and then struggled to find somewhere who was open for a late lunch (we found this problem last time we were in Eden). The '\$2 Café' however (on Imlay Street), accommodated us and whilst the grill was in the process of being cleaned, the owner used a frying pan to organise a couple of hamburgers for us. This café has a lovely little verandah area out the front. After a disappointing 'cappuccino' (where I highly suspect egg white in the froth) at the Fisherman's Club, we then dropped our washing off before investigating another potential access to town.

Of course, just so I wouldn't relax a swarm of swallows has provided me with several hours of cleaning; their droppings in a line down the outside of each hull. The cats, bless their cotton socks, just sat and watched the birds from inside the cockpit: So much for being feline.....9

Kathump!

Close encounters of the feathered kind



We both admired in awe the large souring albatross which approached the boat and turned gracefully in the air above our deck; and then went head first into our genoa. The next moment we saw a dark and white lump fall toward the deck and heard a very distinct kathump. 'That can't be good,' we both exclaimed in unison.



The stunned and dazed bird got himself on his feet and had to work out how to get going again. A couple of attempts at spreading his wings on the deck didn't work (as there was not enough room) and he then started walking down the side of the boat. I asked Andrew to open the back lifeline so he could go off the end but the bird weighed up his options and worked out it was ok to jump over the side (without spreading his wings). You could almost see his thought processes. The photos are from the back because if I'd approached him from the front his escape would have been blocked by our kayak. It was a wonderful experience. According to our field guide on albatrosses they can be potentially impossible to identify if they are not in adult plumage. We were lucky and hoped our Shy Albatross might just try to be a bit shy next time and avoid a collision.