



Continuing the trip north

...although the weather wasn't playing ball

The whole idea about heading north for the winter is to take advantage of the improved and warmer weather as the seasons change. At the start of April we found ourselves in Eden, where after a few pleasant days, we were bombarded with 24 hours of miserable rain...and it just got worse from there.....

Easter in Eden

37° 4.62' S 149° 58.99'

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COB

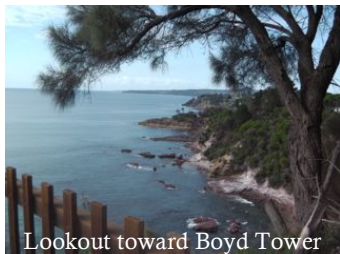
Crew OverBoard!

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Lest We Forget!

Not the service I expected

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Lookout toward Boyd Tower



Aslings Beach



Aslings Beach Road pathway



'The Clara'



Aslings Beach Road plaque

Continuing our break from sailing at the beginning of April, and because I wanted to further explore Eden, we deliberately missed the first weather window to head north. The next opportunity however was another week away.

Easter in Eden

On Good Friday we tied up at the Cattle Creek Wharf and walked up Cattle Creek Road, across Imlay Street and down toward the beach at Calle Calle Bay. There is an old cemetery there with both historic and modern graves and we spent a somber half an hour walking amongst them.

From the cemetery we then followed the footpath along Aslings Beach Road. The path has images in the concrete every so often depicting a part of Eden's history; either about historic events or practices or about particular people or vessels. Each of these images has an associated plaque on an adjacent post with further information on it (I'd passed a couple of the images before I realised the plaques existed). The photo adjacent is of the Clara. According to The associated plaque, The Clara was a 'small trading vessel' between Eden and Lakes Entrance (and several hamlets in between). She was owned by Ike Warren who was 'immortalised' by Henry Lawson in his poem the 'Mallacoota Bar'.

When you get to the end of the footpath on Aslings Beach Road you can come back toward town via the beach, or do what we did and cross the road and from the Eden Tourist Park walk along the side of Lake Curralo on the Allan Gibson boardwalk. There are a couple of places where you can get off the pathway to sit and ponder across the lake. From the end of the boardwalk we then walked to the Country Club for lunch (mainly a Chinese menu; simple but good value (generally \$10-\$14 for a dish (including rice)) and then walked back to the boat.

On Saturday we again walked up Cattle Creek Road to the west end of the main street and the Coles supermarket (dropping off our gas bottle for refilling on the way). This is by far the easier way to get to Coles (the IGA is at the top of the hill if you don't want to go a big brand) as the path isn't so steep but you need to tie your tender up to the Cattle Creek Wharf.



Below Marine Rescue Eden

The trick here is to note the tides. There is no opportunity to step down onto a lower platform if you tie up at high tide and the tide goes out – the lower steps have rotted away. We came back with the tide at low and we contemplated going to the pub for a few hours but that would have meant a long walk back up the hill. Fortunately, Andrew has long legs and he managed to jump the distance. He then took the tinnie to the beach so I could get in from there – I got wet feet but at least we weren't stranded. The guaranteed way to avoid this, of course, would be to beach your tender on the sand and avoid the wharf altogether.

In the afternoon we did a rubbish run to the main wharf then walked up the hill to Lookout Point, past the Seaman's Memorial Wall, and visited the Marine Rescue building. The volunteer on duty showed us the electronic equipment and procedures needed to run it (thanks Doug) so we now understand the system a bit better and how it operates.



Nullica Bay beach

He also directed us to the app where we could log in and log off ourselves via a mobile phone (however we subsequently discovered the app is only useful for trips of less than 24 hours).



Sengo from Nullica Bay beach

Easter Sunday was a magnificent sunny day and we moved across to Nullica Bay just after lunch. I spent the afternoon snipping all the pulled cotton off the outside towels (where Cilla's claws had caught) and baked for the first time in weeks.

Monday was overcast but late in the morning we decided to go and have a look at the Boyd Town church. Our first attempt at landing on the beach was a wet one as our final push onto the beach was via a shore break. I had a very wet (and therefore grumpy) captain after we

had surfed onto the beach. Fighting to get back over the shore break (where we got even wetter) we motored back to Sengo where the captain could change into dry clothes (I figured I was going to get wet again anyway so didn't bother) and we headed back to the beach to try again (to a different spot this time where the shore break was nullified by rocks). This meant however we had a longer walk to our destination. Two lots of fishermen, who each had a fire along the beach in preparation for a lunchtime catch, were trying their luck. The first fisherman was hoping for bream or flathead. The second one didn't care - anything would do just as long as it was bigger than the hermit crab (5cm across) previously caught.



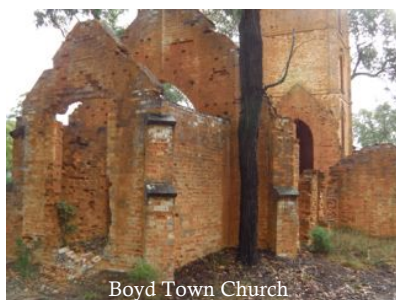
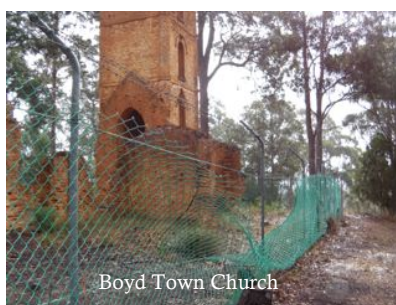
Seahorse Inn Hotel, Boyd Town

Just as we got the Seahorse Inn Hotel it started to rain so we went inside for lunch to wait it out. It was still raining after lunch so we had coffee in the lounge. When it finally got to a dripping point we were happy to walk in (three

hours after we got there) we trundled up the hill to the church to discover it surrounded by mesh fence. Clearly this hasn't stopped some tourists (despite the security notice) as the fence has been breached severely in one location and bent at a few others in order for people to get photographs. An article on the web from the Sydney Morning Herald in 1934 says there were mounds representing old graves around the church, but we were too busy dodging the rain to further explore. We walked back to the tinnie to find we arrived on dead low tide (this seems to becoming a habit!). Fortunately, it wasn't too much of an effort to drag the tinnie back into the water and around a couple of rocks to head back to a dry boat.

Tuesday was beautiful. The rain had cleared the sky and it was a glorious day. I had a go at cleaning the 'clears' around the helm station and tidying the back cockpit. But the warnings were dire and we watched the bom.gov.au rain radar for 8 hours before the rain and wind finally hit us at 8pm-ish. Green Cape's wind reached 57 knots at 0416 on Wednesday morning and the day continued grey, windy and wet. (The decks however looked clean again).

At <http://eden.nsw.au> there is a great poem called Cattle Bay that gives a good summary of some of Eden's history.



Eden to Pittwater

37° 4.62' S 149° 58.99' to 33° 37.499'

We planned to leave around 0800 on Friday morning but as usual it was 0830 before we got the anchor up and it was 0850 when we finally got out of Two Fold Bay and turned north. We managed to sail until 3am in the morning when an engine went on and stayed on for most of the next 12 hours. At one stage there was that little wind the sea was like glass. Having said we were going to check into Woolongong (Port Kembla) at 12pm on Saturday I was surprised when Port Kembla called us an hour earlier (at 11am) – clearly they were looking for things to do. (Like the poor lonely fellow at Marine Rescue Tamar as we were heading west along Bass Strait who called out every 30 minutes wanting position reports until he closed the station down. I almost rang him just to say I'd heard him – clearly he wanted a chat).

The scheduled call out of the way we reconsidered our plan. We'd estimated it would take us, with worse case scenario about two days to get to Pittwater. As the trip progressed we worked out it was going to be around 0400 when we made it to our destination. Not₄

wanting to head down Pittwater in the dark (and therefore anchor in the dark with other boats around us) I suggested we take a stop at Jibbon Beach, Port Hacking. As it turned out we overnighted here and had an early (0730) start. Again we were able to turn our motors off just as we turned north out of Port Hacking and sailed right through into Broken Bay, dropping our sails at Barrenjoey Head in order to make it easier to negotiate down the



Glass like seas off Port Kembla



Sunset south of Jervis Bay

Pittwater. There were power boats and sail boats everywhere and yacht races going on and we'd only just been able to get through the race outside the heads with our sails up. (also by this stage the wind was up around the 18-20 knot mark at we were hitting 11 knots boat speed – it was time to slow down). We anchored in familiar Morning Bay around 1500, thankfully just a few minutes before it started to rain.

Pittwater

33° 37.499' S 151° 17.308' E

13 April – 24 April

We went back to Pittwater to organize some more works on the boat: front cockpit covers; quotes for minor warranty works; installation opportunities for new propellers; and, organize a new gen-set and water-maker. We also caught up with a couple of new yachty friends (both cat' owners). We didn't however plan for the 'worst storm of the century.'

The East Coast Low

There were at least 50 boats lost, 5 sunk (and one sailing related death (being investigated)) in the Broken Bay/Pittwater area during the dreaded East Coast Low; dubbed 'the worst storm of the century' or 'the worst storm in eight years' depending on which Sydney newspaper you read. The dire warnings were made well in advance

and we tucked ourselves into Morning Bay. A little exposed but okay for a couple of days until Monday morning when we noted that we may have moved. It is possible it was just a change of direction that had the anchor turning but by Monday afternoon we decided we would have a go at resetting it. Unfortunately, by the time



East Coast Low Morning Bay



East Coast Low Morning Bay

we did this it was getting dark and I was out in the driving rain, the wind was horrendous and the new bridle clip got stuck just as we were getting the chain up. (In stressed frustration I had to work out how to solve this issue before we could do anything and the wind was now pushing us toward permanently moored boats!) The eventual decision was to grab one of the club

moorings at the end of the bay; not a practice in which we usually partake as we had to consider the capacity of the mooring. Whilst the official yacht club moorings would have a decent capacity (we are a heavy boat) the other 'club' moorings around Pittwater consist of ownership by 'clubs' of 'a small number of private members' and the moorings may only be spec'd out to their

individual boats. We kept a very close eye on our GPS position. The mooring held: we didn't move.

There were a few other yachts anchored/moored out of the way in Morning Bay (including one unusual visitor – see below) and we all seemed to get off relatively lightly. Whilst we were anchored we recorded close to 30

A Notorious Ship

On Sunday 19th April **Notorious**, a replica of a 15th century Portuguese caravel, anchored close to us in Morning Bay. The boat was built by Graeme Wylie and was inspired by the legendary Mahogany Ship shipwrecked near Warrnambool, in south-west Victoria (see Wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahogany_Ship). Details of Notorious can be found at [Wikipedia.org/wiki/Notorious_\(ship\)](http://Wikipedia.org/wiki/Notorious_(ship)) and the boat has a Facebook page. Her keel is made from reclaimed ironwood and the rest of her from recycled Monterey Pine. The



Caravel Notorious Morning Bay



Caravel Notorious

Notorious is 21 metres long and 17 metres high and weighs 55 tonnes. She is also covered in a significant amount of tar (600 litres) so is almost black and to start with I had no idea what was heading our way. We would have gone to say hello but the weather was miserable and tipped to get worse. She was here as part of a three-day event at the Royal Motor Yacht Club on 25th, 26th and 27th April.

knots. On the mooring, a bit more sheltered, we recorded around 20 knots. I saw the caravel reset its anchor one morning but everyone seemed settled apart from that.

The wind was loud, the rain was horrendous (although we kept an eye on bom.gov.au and other places seemed to get more), and the Pittwater was one of the areas declared a disaster zone. We also kept an ear on the VHF Channel 16. Lots of wandering boats were

taken to Coasters Retreat by the water police and marine rescue vessels. The worst was over by early Wednesday morning.

We took a break in the weather on Wednesday (and the offer of a car) to do some food shopping and drop my computer off (long story but essentially I did something really silly and I needed a professional to look at it). Pleading my case that I might

not be back for a few weeks they made me a priority and despite the fact the job took them longer than expected I got the computer back late on Thursday afternoon.



Pittwater to Port Stephens

23 April – 24 April

We dropped the mooring at 1745 and headed up to Broken Bay just as it started to get dark. Our original idea was to check the swell out when it was well and truly light and make an assessment when we could abort to another anchorage in daylight. However, waiting for the computer to be fixed (a very big thank you to Mac & Me, Newport Beach for their support) meant we didn't leave until later than expected. The swell was bigger than preferred but not overly uncomfortable (I think that equates to: 'I didn't feel too sea sick'). However there was no wind and

unfortunately we motor sailed all the way.

There is not much to do when on a night sail with the boat on autopilot (apart from making sure you don't hit anything), so you tend to focus on the calls to and from other ships and stations. This night was the first time I'd actually heard someone query someone else's intentions. In navigation training you learn that the signal for this is to honk the horn five times, and if in doubt call. I heard one tanker call another, (in a hard to understand international accent) to work out where each ship was going. He actually said 'what are your intentions.' As it was, both were heading

to 'holding grounds' outside Newcastle Harbour. I am reluctant to say 'anchorages' as none of the twenty plus tankers out there were anchored, they were all drifting, with or without the notification of 'not under command' on the AIS screen. In fact I had to alter course significantly to make sure I missed one of them (at 2am)!

Occasionally I would hear warnings from the marine rescue stations. Newcastle was warning all boats within its harbour that large debris had been sighted coming down the Hunter – which is understandable

after the storm damage the east coast low had done in the previous few days – but they made a point of mentioning ‘including cars.’ Thinking about it now, I remember the pictures from Bundaberg, Queensland when it got flooded a few years ago and the huge plume of rubbish going out to sea. Perhaps it wasn’t a good idea to do this journey overnight. (even though we were around 10.5 nautical miles off shore).

From 2am onwards marine rescue Port Stephens was broadcasting navigation warnings; firstly that the light on Corrie Island was only partially working and, secondly, that an unattached navigation aid was somewhere off Nelson Point. Fortunately we didn’t have to worry about these in the dark; we entered the Port in daylight.

Two of the three courtesy moorings at Nelson Bay were occupied and another yacht was clearly making a b-line for the third so we picked up a mooring off Dutchmans Bay instead, just around the corner.



Port Stephens

24 April- 30 April

The morning of the 25th April 2015 was spectacular and the day was delightfully warm. We enjoyed coffee overlooking the Port and took a short walk around the Nelson Bay marina area before attending the Anzac Day service (see page 11). Sunday 26th April however was windy. This was the first day of the next ‘east coast low’ after the devastating one the week before. Sydney copped horrendous hailstorms but we were, thankfully, lucky. The wind however created some interesting conditions and due to the quirk of tides, wind and current we found ourselves doing 360’s. We hadn’t read Allan Lucas’ guide that suggested during the winter westerlies anything east of Salamander Bay is uncomfortable or we may have moved earlier. When we did move to Salamandar Bay it took us four attempts at anchoring before we were comfortable with the hold. Monday 27th April started out with beautiful clear blue skies although clouds were created and dissipated throughout the day. The ‘technical’ job of the day was to start the process of rethreading a new reefing line into the main sail

(the old one having frayed and broken) and Andrew worked out how to get it through the boom. This job was completed in bright sunshine but freezing winds. The rest of the task would wait.



On Tuesday 28th April we did the Soldiers Point walk described in the booklet ‘*Bushwalks around Port Stephens*’ by Michael Smith. This walk served two purposes: a) to get in a decent bit of exercise, and, b) to check out the Marina we are booked into in May. They copped 74 knot winds and sustained some damage the previous week but didn’t lose power. Power was still not back on at some Port Stephens communities; a week after the storm. Friday 29th May we took a sail around Port Stephens (finishing off the rethreading of the reef as we raised the sail) and a little after lunchtime we settled into Tanilba Bay.

Soldiers Point walk in photographs

28th April 2015



Pelican, Salamander Bay



Soldiers Point



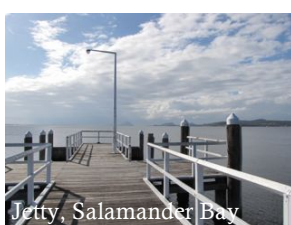
Soldiers Point



Near Green Point



Pelicans, Salamander Bay



Jetty, Salamander Bay



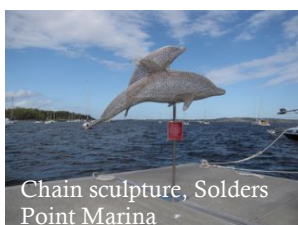
Housing contrast,
Salamander Bay



Solders Point Marina



Solders Point



Chain sculpture, Solders
Point Marina



Old slipway, Green Point



Near Green Point



Tilligerry Habitat



Tilligerry Habitat



Tilligerry Habitat

Exploring Tanilba Bay

30 April 2015

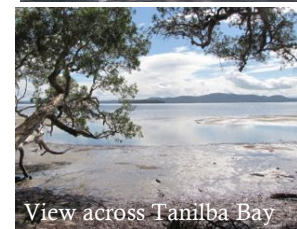
On the last day of April 2015 we went ashore at Tanilba Bay – no jetties ensuring we got our feet wet - and went for a very delightful stroll around the Tilligerry Habitat (see <http://www.tilligerryhabitat.org.au>). The Tilligerry Peninsula has a sustainable koala population and the land managed by the center is also nurturing bandicoots as well as lots and lots of birds. Lunch at the tired RSL Sports Club was cheap (\$10 for a limited choice, basic, but hot meal) before we walked down through the Tanilba Bay stone gates and down the Avenue of the Allies built in 1931. We didn't get to Tanilba House (One of Australia's oldest houses; built in 1831). That will have to wait until next time.



Tilligerry Habitat



Tanilba Bay Gate



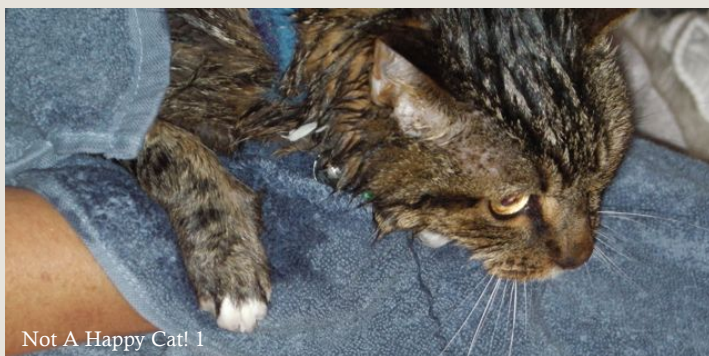
View across Tanilba Bay

COB - Cat Overboard!

We now know Tiger can swim! Tiger now knows Tiger can swim. But I guarantee Tiger probably never wants swim again. Having just been released from the confines of the cabin after our overnight sail, Tiger was on the back edge of the boat when we think he was startled by the noise of the metal lifejacket clips hitting the fiberglass cockpit table. From the corner of my eye I saw my normally over-sensitive cat jump into the air in fright. As he's landed he's missed his footing and... over he went. In a panic I immediately jump in after him; fully clothed with jeans, deck shoes, (and eye glasses) on. Instead of swimming toward the back of the boat where it would have been quicker to retrieve him, however, Tiger decides to swim between the hulls toward the front; going for the window escape hatch he

sees every day from inside. Once at the hatch he gets the strength to put his paw out and of course can't get hold of anything. He then swims a bit further along and tries again. His little paw just slips down the sloped fiberglass. He finally turns toward me (I've been calling him all this time) and I grab him by the harness. In a panic (he's starting to cry now) he grabs on to me with his front claws – straight onto my lower lip. My head goes immediately under and I am now struggling to keep both the cat and myself above water. The easiest way to do this, rather than have my arm high up out of the water dangling the cat, was to lean back and get him on my chest while I kick to the back of the boat. His claws, of course, manage to dig into a few more places. Andrew finally coordinates himself to the back steps and grabs the cat and I take a few deep breaths before I swim to the swim

steps Andrew has now lowered for me. In the meantime the soaking ball of fur goes sulking downstairs to our bed. After getting out of my own set of sodden clothes I grab some towels and give him a bit of a drying down but in a short time he gets sick of this and struggles out of my hold, adding scratches on my legs to the ones already on my face, my stomach and my arms. After some advice from my vet in Victoria, I booked into a local vet to check that 'secondary drowning' isn't going to be an issue. I must have looked (and I certainly felt) suitably upset when asking a local where the info centre or the taxi rank was so I could get to the vet quickly (otherwise it was a 15 minute walk) that he offered me a lift. He also gave me a lift back. Thanks Greg! In just over an hour Tiger endured a dunking, a noisy tinnie ride to and from shore (in a cage he hates), and was examined by a stranger. My scratches may or may not give me physical scars but I guarantee Tiger won't lose his mental ones! He was Not A Happy Cat!



Not A Happy Cat! 1



Not A Happy Cat! 2

Lest We Forget

25th April 2015 has been a significant date in the planning process for our sea change for quite some time. In 2010 we attended a dawn service in Peaceful Bay, WA. It was suitably drizzling and suitably poignant as this was the last place the Diggers would have seen of the mainland before landing in Egypt in WWI. So, for the Centenary I wanted to be a) on our boat and b) at a suitably similar poignant location. Having found ourselves at Nelson Bay, an area with a large military support base, we contemplated attending the Dawn Service for 25th April 2015. Getting up early however wasn't the issue – it was the state of the water. This area had undergone serious storm events in the previous week and the water in Port Stephens was a 'lovely' Yarra River brown and full of washed down debris (rubbish, sticks and logs) both above and below the water's surface. Clearly, powering through unknown waters with these sorts of hazards in a slightly unstable car-topper tinnie in the dark was not really a good idea. So, whilst I got up and saw a magnificent sunrise, we did not attend the Dawn Service, opting instead to attend the main commemoration later in the morning.

The main event was to start with the march commencing at 10.30 at the bowling club and once all had arrived, the service would begin at 10.50 in Apex Park at the bottom of the hill behind the marina. Older members of the military services were driven in, and those able to march proceeded down the street, through an appreciative crowd, to gather in the roped off areas. Included were local school children whom, unfortunately at the end of the march, were placed in the crowd behind adults and unable to see the proceedings. Only a couple audio speakers were placed around Apex Park and whilst they would have been adequate if all other noises were eliminated, were not enough for the crowd gathered further up the hill. The Wing Commander's speech was moving, yet included some light humour in the details to reflect on perspective. Unfortunately being quiet and reflective was impossible as during the ceremony we had two ambulances come though the crowd (sirens going), one garbage truck drive down the hill with his horrible brakes, and then proceed to back up the hill as noisy as garbage trucks get, uncontrolled crying children and one child near me started sniffing. All this managed to block out

most of the speeches. If all this wasn't bad enough the band was way too quiet and the choir quieter still (except for one lady who set the PA screeching with her VERY flat voice). Imagine if I hadn't turned my phone off – then the phone call at 11am would have added to the mix. It was a teeth-clenching experience. Lest We Forget the 100th anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli. We certainly won't!

