

Aboard Sengo

July 2016

More magical Maggie

European history, rock wallabies, and murky water.

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Hinchinbrook

A million sandflies but spectacular scenery.

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Geoffrey Bay Rock Wallaby

Cute, and perpetually hungry!

In and around Innisfail

Driving on solid ground: exploring natural and man-made history.

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Tropical Travels

In July we went from magnificent Maggie to delightful Dunk to Innisfail on the Johnstone River. We hid from the weather, explored new places; and learnt more about Australia's natural, military, and political history.



Geoffrey Bay Rock Wallaby

‘Magnetic’al’ Island

Captain James Cook named Magnetic Island ‘Magnetical Island’ on 7th June 1770, after his instruments seemed to go haywire in its vicinity. Subsequent studies have found no basis for this phenomenon.

The first European family to occupy Magnetic Island was the Butler Family who settled at Camoomillii, now known as Picnic Bay, on the southern side of the island in 1876.

In 1883 a quarantine station was set up on the island.

In 1885 land was first opened up for settlement. In 1887 the first land auction occurred in Camoomilli, followed by the opening up of land in Nelly Bay, Arcadia and Cockle Bay in 1895, and Horseshoe Bay in 1897.

Note: Information from interpretation boards in grounds of Magnetic Historical Museum.

Further Exploration of Magnetic Island

1st July 2016

We love to learn about the places we stop at but our visit to the museum at Picnic Bay was disappointing. Granted, it is manned by volunteers, and open in the restricted hours from 1000 to 1400, but I advise not going in school holidays. The bulk of the current interpretation is in an old building reclaimed from the site of Harry Butler’s original resort (one of the two bedroom cottages). It is a small shack; the first room is dedicated to the Butler family, the second room is a research library, and the large open room, that would have been the living area, dedicated to whichever current exhibition is on. The acoustics are not good, and they are exceptionally awful if you have a couple of loud children and their mother fussing over final details with grandma, one of the volunteers. I couldn’t concentrate and left having not read a quarter of the displays.

The other main building on site is the old Picnic Bay School building (the site is the old Picnic Bay School site) and it contains some more interpretation, including the history of the school and education on the island. Mostly however, this building holds craft for sale by the locals.

Disappointed at the experience, we consoled ourselves with coffee and cake at the Picnic Bay Hotel overlooking the Picnic Bay Jetty. These guys know how to do froth so if you ask for a cappuccino, you are actually likely to get one (a rarity in Queensland!).

Making our way back toward Horseshoe Bay, we popped into the Tamarind Teahouse in Arcadia for a light lunch before heading across to the beach to visit the wallabies.

At the eastern end of Geoffrey Bay, where the old vehicular jetty lies in ruins you can find many curious, and oddly (perpetually?) hungry, rock wallabies. Signs stipulate that the government prefers you don’t feed them, but this is rarely adhered to, so the signs also prescribe what is acceptable and what is not acceptable food. Carrots are popular as they are easy to obtain. You can also buy special food for this purpose at nearby Arcadia. Some of the wallabies look well, however, some look quite scruffy. I don’t condone feeding the wildlife and we didn’t.



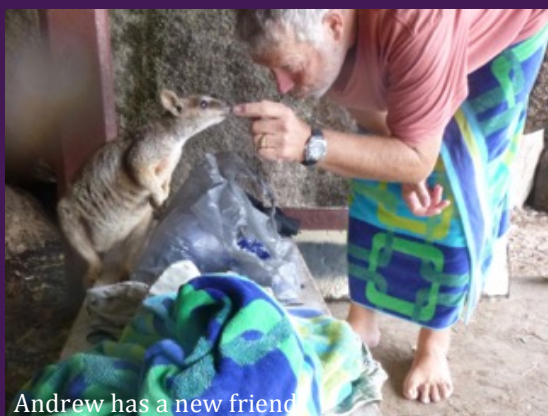
Picnic Bay Jetty



Preparing to enter the murky water: Geoffrey Bay



Murky water: Geoffrey Bay



Andrew has a new friend

Coochie- Coochie-coo. This wallaby didn't care that we were trying to dry off and get changed under the shelter; it just wanted to be fed!

Grey Day at Geoffrey Bay

4th July 2016

The morning was overcast and raining. But at least the wind had died down. I had been waiting for the southerlies to drop right off so we could go snorkeling at Geoffrey Bay (one of several spots around Magnetic Island listed as good snorkeling and diving) whilst we still had access to a car (thanks G).

However when we got there the sky was overcast, the water was murky and cold, and it started to rain. The first challenge was to get to the water. This is a spot the local dive shop leaves from but to get to the water's edge you have to head down a steep boat ramp and scramble over some rocks. The many buoys on the reef here indicate a snorkeling trail; including points of interest such as giant clams, a wreck and there is also apparently an aero-plane propeller- guides are available at the local dive shop (which we will check out first next time) but we couldn't see much. I actually saw more fish on the way back than the way out.

It was still raining when we came out of the water so we decided the small shelter with seats would be a good place to get changed. This is where some of the wallabies come in to get fed, and therefore is a congregating place for tourists. It was empty when we carried our gear over but within a couple of minutes we had a group of four German tourists around us trying to feed the marsupials carrot whilst we were trying to get into dry clothes. I waited some time but they wouldn't leave - In the end I thought 'to hell with subtlety' (our towels were fairly big) and there is nothing I've got they haven't seen before - I got into my clothes as quickly as I could without exposing too much bare skin.

We headed back to the Picnic Bay Hotel for coffee and cake and came home via the Nelly Bay IGA.



Climbing Castle Hill The Goat Track!



Climbing Castle Hill

5th July 2016. The day's plan was to take the shortest route to the summit of Castle Hill (Townsville's 'almost mountain') and then back down an alternate track, bringing us into reasonable vicinity of where we were picking up cat food ([The Queensland Cat Clinic](#)) before bussing it to Castletown Shopping Centre to pick up my spectacles. If we were then feeling historically inclined, a trip to the Maritime Museum was a possibility.

The shortest way up Castle Hill from the Townsville Sealink ferry terminal was steep. Aptly named The Goat Track, it has, according to the 'thegotownsville.com.au' website on the Castle Hill walking tracks, a 'three puff' rating. We took an hour to climb up, but that was with breaks. Fortunately, we had the foresight to grab our neglected, rarely-used, waking sticks before we left and these were a great help. We found the walk tough, but were flabbergasted to find people overtaking us by running up the track. They must be mad!

The view however was worth it. There are several spots up the top to enjoy the vista (each spot gives you a different direction and perspective) and we didn't get to visit them all.

Our trip back down wasn't quite as planned though. Our chosen track would have brought us back into civilisation closest to the vet's practice, but was closed off for maintenance and therefore we had a choice to make. Do we head back up the hill and return via The Goat Track – putting us within a couple of kilometers of where we needed to be but in the wrong direction? Do we keep heading down the road, which would have put us further away from where we needed to be in the wrong direction? Or, do we take the next available bush track, making us walk further but at least the general direction was right.

We chose the third option, heading down the Ironbark Track. We ended up coming back into civilisation closer to Castletown Shopping Centre than the cat clinic so we picked up my specs first.

We took a bus to pick up the cat food, and loaded up with this we waddled back to Breakwater Marina to suss out where the fuel dock was, before picking up the ferry and heading back to Magnetic Island. (We were too footsore to do any more walking so the Maritime Museum will just have to wait until next time).



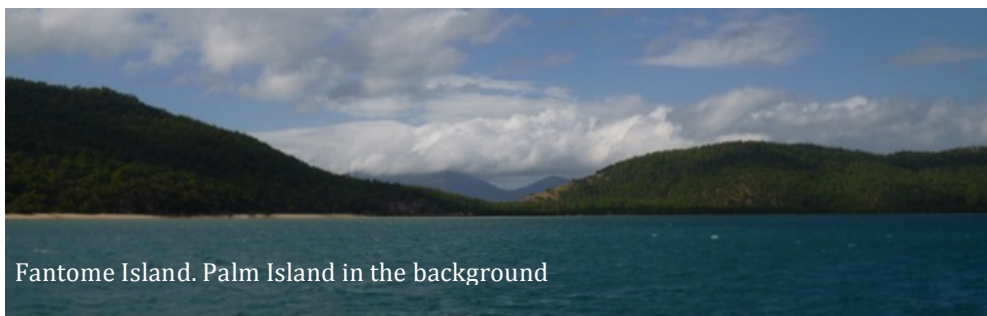
Tracking back down

Castle Hill

The View from the top



looking across to Magnetic Island



Fantome Island. Palm Island in the background

Fantome Island

7th July 2016

Whist we hadn't near exhausted our exploration of Magnetic Island, with many walking tracks and snorkeling spots yet to experience, we decided it was time to move on, and the as yet unexplored places will wait until we visit here again. The essential tasks of voting, victualing and filling my spectacles prescription had been done and new horizons await us.

After having said our goodbyes to *Osiris II*, *Vanagi*, *Arkaydes*, *Rene* and *Moor R&R* the previous night, we headed off at the leisurely time of 1000 for the trip north. The predicted wind speed was 5 to 10 knots, and we would have reluctantly been grateful for this, but the wind didn't get above 5 knots so we motored all the way. The anchor was down in Juno Bay, Fantome Island in around 10 meters of water at 1630. The evening was serene, quiet, with little birdsong and a lovely setting sun over the mainland.

Fantome Island has a sad, and largely unknown history. It has hosted both a lock hospital (hospital for sexually transmitted diseases) and a lazarette (Hansens Disease (leprosy) colony) for displaced and transported Aborigines, Torres Strait, and South Sea Islanders, when they were moved to the 'safety' of the isolated island under several 'protectionist' (read 'segregationist') Acts of Parliament from the early 1900s. The lock hospital operated from 1928 to 1945 and the lazarette from 1939 until 1972, when it was abandoned and its occupants were transported across to the nearby Palm Island Hospital. Both sites have eerie ruins: the lazarette a wasteland of concrete bases to buildings, broken asbestos cement sheeting and roofing, rusting pipes, baths, sinks, stoves and beds. The hospital has less debris, although the concrete bases of a few buildings survive. The hospital grounds have a large group of man-made stone enclosures, and stone lined pathways. There are also graves on the island but we didn't see these.



Debris: Fantome Island



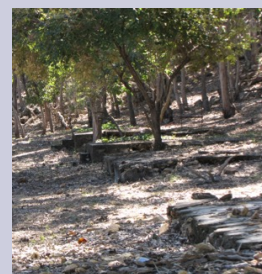
Debris: Fantome Island



Debris: Fantome Island



Debris: Fantome Island



Stone Wall: Fantome Island



Walking the beach at Yanks Jetty

Orpheus Island

Hazard Bay and Yanks Jetty

Apparently the morning south westerly is common around here and of course this put us on a lee shore. The wind against tide time had been uncomfortable, with of course, the added bonus of a side on swell, but the rest of our stay had been pretty calm. We moved from Juno Bay, Fantome Island to Hazard Bay, Orpheus Island a distance of a few nautical miles, just before lunch, and the wind was sufficient to travel just on genoa. Originally heading straight for Little Pioneer Bay we thought we would stop and check out Yanks Jetty first- located just south of Hazard Bay.

We anchored a fair way out towards the southern end of Hazard Bay; you can't go too far in anyway because of reef. There is an exclusive resort at Hazard Bay and visiting yachts are not welcome. The rooms range up to \$2900 per night and the number of guests is limited.

After lunch the wind had died down a bit and the sun was out and we took a tinnie ride around the corner to Yanks Jetty, tying up at the side. The Sealink Ferry (there are regular tourist cultural trips to here) was already there with a bunch of people who got off to snorkel and walk in the sun.



Yanks Jetty

We took a short walk to the end of the beach – where there were toilets, picnic tables and a gas bbq. The campsites (permits required) are furrowed little grottos just behind the beach.

At the beach end of the jetty on the rocks at where the beach meets the bush is a concrete base. Upon further exploration up a scrambly looking path there are steps up to this base. From here further up the hill into the rainforest is the inkling of a track. It was a scabbly track, clearly not maintained and as I had just come up a steep and awkward section, I realized it was one not suitable for exploring with the adventure sandals I had on. Proper boots for grip would be required, possibly the walking sticks (although perhaps hands were needed more as I used both hands to scramble down from where I was) and a lot more time. It was mid afternoon, who knows where the track went and we were not prepared (and I would not want to be scrabbling down that track in the dark). We waited for the Sealink rabble to leave before heading back to Sengo – with the possible idea of coming back to Yanks Jetty in the morning for a snorkel.

Arkaydes sailed in to anchor next to us around an hour after we got back on board and joined us on Sengo for sundowners. I read later that there were the remnants of WWII occupation at this site (possibly the concrete base) and a shepherd's hut, which I assume was further up the track.

Despite the island being a national park, no walking tracks are advertised so I suspect the original paths will be falling into disrepair.



At Yanks Jetty



At Yanks Jetty



View from ridgeline back across Pioneer Bay. Sengo and Arkaydes are small dots.



Shepherds Hut ruins



Shepherds Hut ruins

but could find no extra information on the internet. From the hut an old track heads further into the rainforest, through various vegetation communities before emerging into a grassland area half way up the hill. The track continues through long grass, signposted by cairns, before arriving at the ridge where you have a vista across both sides of the island. The knee-high grass on the last bit of the track had been 'squashed' but as a result you could not see what the terrain was underneath it. For the vegetation and terrain on this track I recommend good walking shoes and long trousers. Sundowners was on **Arkaydes**.

Pioneer Bay is home to a marine research station run by Cook University. Apparently tours of the facility can be arranged but we didn't have the time. Pioneer Bay is also the location of a giant clam experimental farm. The results were so successful they had to transplant the clams elsewhere



Beach: Little Pioneer Bay



Rainforest above Little Pioneer Bay

Little Pioneer Bay – 12th July 2016

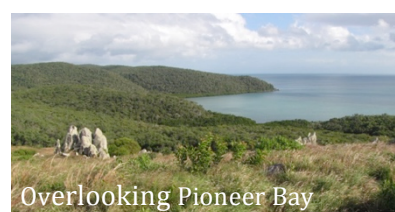
The idea of a morning snorkel at Yanks Jetty was unfortunately quashed. The wind was up, the swell was up – beam on – it was overcast, and it was threatening rain. Not ideal conditions for a snorkel. And not the conditions in which to try and get off Sengo! Activity aborted we finally picked up anchor around 1100 for the short hop to Little Pioneer Bay. We put our genoa up for the trip, gaining us around 1 knot but we motored all the way. The distance was only 6 nautical miles.

Little Pioneer Bay is on the north-west corner section of Orpheus Island and tucked into the back of Pioneer Bay. It has a small beach and four public moorings. The beach is fronted by reef and a few isolated bommie and reef areas are marked with reef protection buoys. After lunch the sun decided it would grant us with its presence and the wind calmed down enough so we could get in the tinnie to go and explore the beach. We expected a short beach walk along the sand.

I had read there was a short 100 meter track at the back of the beach and **Arkaydes** had read there was a ruin and we found the track, leading from the picnic table up the hill to the remnants of a stone hut. In subsequent searches I read this was a shepherd's hut



Looking north along the east side of Orpheus Island

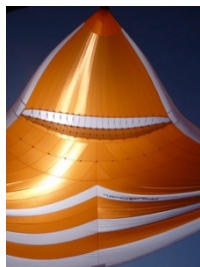


Overlooking Pioneer Bay



Walking through long grass

Hinchinbrook



Little Pioneer Bay to Hinchinbrook Channel

We had a lovely spinnaker run from Little Pioneer Bay, Orpheus Island across to the mainland to the end of the Lucinda Jetty – all 5 km of it! We initially left the spinnaker on the front tramp thinking we might have an opportunity to run it down the channel but sense prevailed and we packed it up before the final turn toward Haycock Island. The crossing was timed so we were coming into the channel on an incoming (rising) tide – we left little Pioneer Bay around the low tide mark – but meant that it was after lunch when we arrived. The sun therefore was shining towards us from the west and so the scenery photographs may have been a bit clearer if they were taken earlier in the day.

You have to follow leads to get into the Hinchinbrook Channel, and technically it is a bar crossing. We were very lucky with our timing. The wind was less than 10 knots and the swell almost non-existent. The rocking across the bar was hardly noticeable and the sun was shining.

We anchored in calm waters on the north side of Haycock Island.

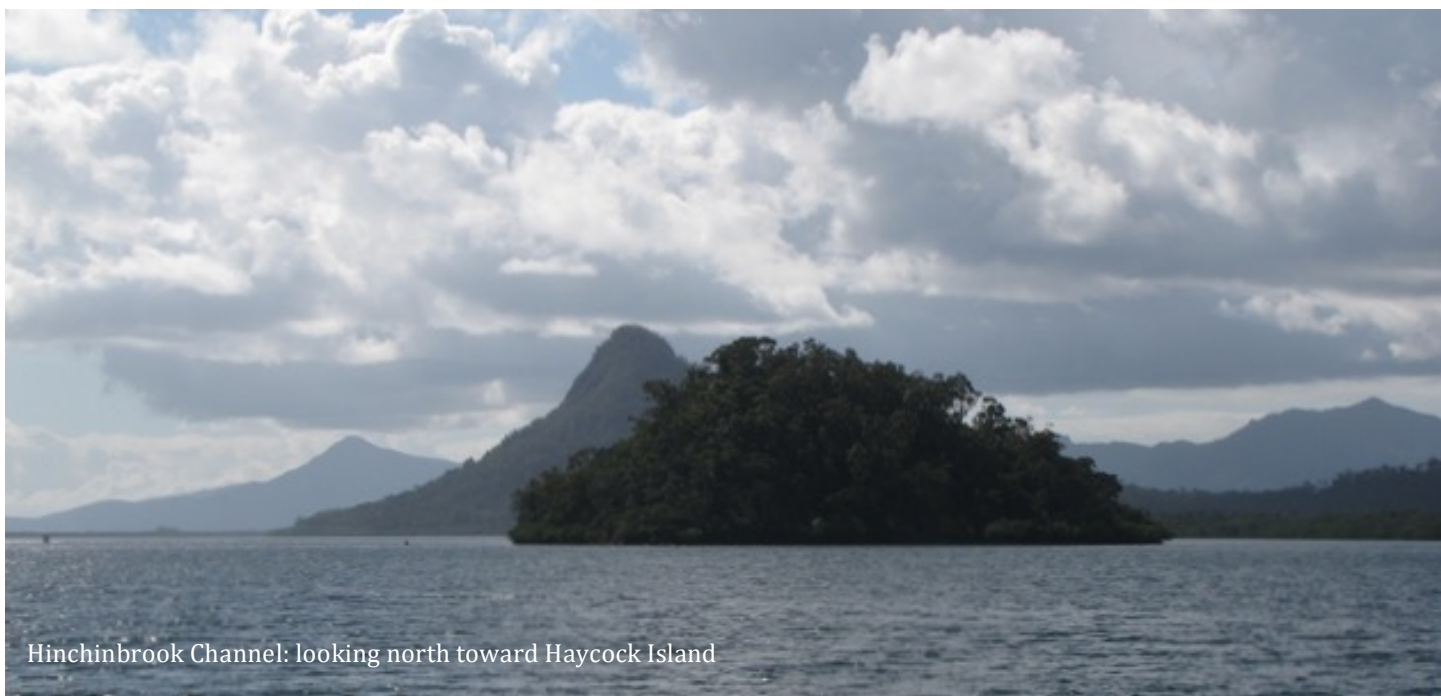
Hinchinbrook Channel extends from Cardwell in the north to Lucinda in the south and separates Hinchinbrook Island from the mainland.



About to pass the old Sugar Wharf, Lucinda

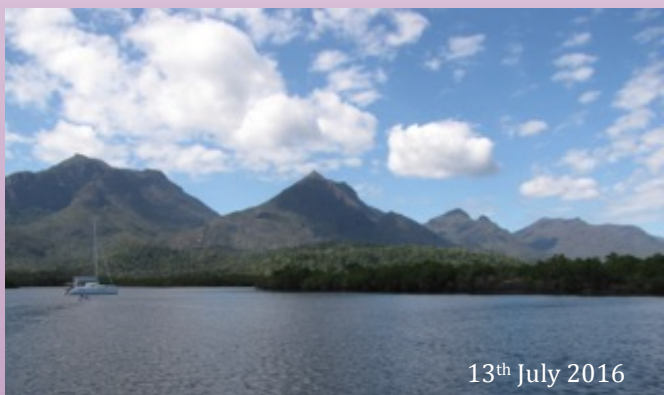
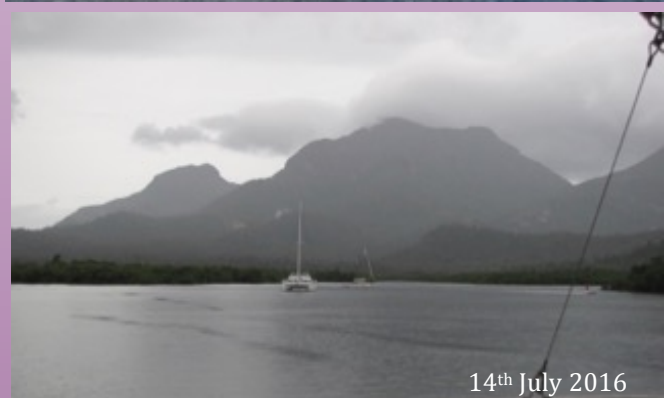


Starting to head up the Channel



Hinchinbrook Channel: looking north toward Haycock Island

Gayundah Creek

13th July 201614th July 201615th July 201616th July 2016

View from Sengo towards Hinchinbrook Island. The catamaran is **Arkaydes**.

Hunkering at Hinchinbrook

13th – 19th July 2016

We awoke to a millpond. No wind. We'd had the best night's sleep we'd had for quite some time and reluctantly we got out of bed. Strong winds were forecast for about a week and for the greatest protection we followed **Arkaydes** up one of the creeks coming from Hinchinbrook Island: Gayundah Creek.

The scenery at Gayundah Creek is glorious but the weather makes a big difference to how it looks...see adjacent.

Andrew managed to go fishing twice with **Arkaydes** over the few days that we were here, although their catch total was zero. The crab pot was deployed for the first time and checked periodically over three days. It was empty of crab until the last checking –then it was empty of bait as well. We knew the crabs were here – they were getting caught in other people's pots.



Deploying the crab pot

When the expected rain did arrive on the 14th July we collected around 90 litres of water; we could have collected more had we had the buckets.

On the 15th July we had **Arkaydes** around for a roast dinner. It was an appropriately cold drizzly day for such a meal.

On the 16th July the sun was back again but as I had a heap of washing to do there was no time to enjoy it. The evening of the 16th however presented me with the opportunity for some great photos.

On the 17th July I got to go exploring. I hadn't got off Sengo and wanted to explore this mangrove-lined creek. Andrew decided he would take his fishing gear and on two trips out in the day managed to catch an Ox-eyed Herring and an Estuary Rock Cod (both were released). The day started off with light clouds and ended with drizzly rain...see page 11.

Overnight it rained. And rained. The idea of getting around to Cape Richards on the morning of the 18th July wasn't stifled by the amount of water however, it was stifled by wind. In the week we had been hiding from the mid 20's to mid 30's winds at Lucinda we didn't record over 12 knots here. On the morning of the 18th we recorded gusts of 16 knots. Lucinda was gusting to 34 knots and we weren't moving!

Hinchinbrook Island

Hinchinbrook Island was declared a national park in 1932. Compared with the rest of the country its habitat values remain virtually untouched and it is an important repository for many plant species, some endemic. The management plan was originally written in 1999 with the latest minor amendments in 2016 (although there was no altered reference to the resort which was burnt in 2015 and whose future remains in limbo). As per many places in Australian history, the local aboriginal population was tragically wiped out with European slaughter and disease.

Hinchinbrook Island hosts one of the biggest mangrove areas in Australia; the area encompassing the four main creeks off the western side, including Gayundah, is also noted as an important crocodile breeding location. We saw no actual crocodiles but both Andrew and I saw a 'crocodile slide' on the bank when we were exploring on the 17th July. At the time, we didn't say anything to each other. Mangroves breed mozzies and sandflies.....and the numbers were horrific. I coped most of the time by wearing long sleeves but did revert to the repellant and mozzie coil at a few weak moments.

Bird list for Hinchinbrook

We didn't really do any bird watching as such but in the course of our days we spotted the following:

Little kingfisher
Sacred kingfisher
Green/striated heron
Intermediate? Egret
Sandpiper/whimbrel?
Sunbird
Rainbow Bee-eater
Brahminy kite
White-bellied sea-eagle
Grey-tailed Tattler?



Exploring Gayundah Creek and its tributaries:

In Pictures:

17th July 2016



Dunk Island

Gayundah Creek to Dunk Island

19th July 2016

I've always wanted to walk the Thorsborne Track on Hinchinbrook Island, a four-day, permit allocated hike. Whilst it would have been too hard to organize it this time – somewhere to moor Sengo and someone to look after the cats – I was at least hoping for an opportunity to step foot upon the Island. As there is nowhere to set foot on the shore at Gayundah Creek, we thought we might head around into Macushla Bay, anchor off Macushla campground and walk from there to the currently closed (Yasi and fire destroyed) Hinchinbrook Resort. Yesterday's decision to stay put in Gayundah Creek was a wise one but the weather seemed to have settled down this morning – according to the forecast at least.



An eerie yellow glow

We had awoken to an eerie yellow glow with no wind, but at high tide when we were heading out of the creek, the wind picked up again, the rain returned and if we had headed around the corner to the destined anchorage we would have been motoring straight into it. Resigning myself to the fact that we would have to visit the island next time we came past, we put the main up (we had been sailing up the channel with the genoa only) and headed towards Dunk



Our first view of Dunk Island

Island instead. The rain was closing in, the clouds were low and sighting land and islands was a challenge. We put the anchor down at around 1330.

Muggy Muggy Beach – 20th July 2016

It was an appropriately muggy, muggy day to walk to Muggy Muggy Beach. It had been raining overnight And yesterday. And the day before. There was that much water in the air that I was not sure if my washing was ever going to dry. I had got up in the middle of the night to rescue the towel and the throw rug from the rain - as I had the night before. And the night before that. The daytime temperature, however, was expected to be higher than normal.



Rainforest track to Muggy Muggy Beach

After a failed attempt at moving to Brammo Bay – the idea was it would give us more protection from the predicted southerly but when we got there the north-easterly swell was going to override any advantages, - we re-anchored around the corner opposite Pallon Beach, before joining **Arkaydes** for a walk to Muggy Muggy Beach.

The walk is from the jetty, north-east along the beach past the mostly Yasi-abandoned units of the Dunk Island resort (although some are clearly in use) and through the rainforest around the headland before coming upon the small, coral and sand Muggy Muggy Beach. The rain, thankfully kept away, the resort is closed and no other boat visitors were visiting this small area. A casual wander back had us preparing a late lunch before **Arkadyes** and **Rene** joined us for sundowners.



Muggy Muggy Beach

Up and Over and around – The Circuit Walk

22nd July 2016

On the 21st July we moved around into Brammo Bay to avoid the swell and waited for a suitable window in which to go for a walk. None eventuated and the constant drizzle or threat of drizzle had us staying on board and deciding to delay our departure from Dunk with the hope of a fine day on the morrow so we could explore the island further. To our delight on the morning of the 22nd July 2016 the rain had cleared; although there was still a very low cloud hanging over the top of Mount Kootaloo.

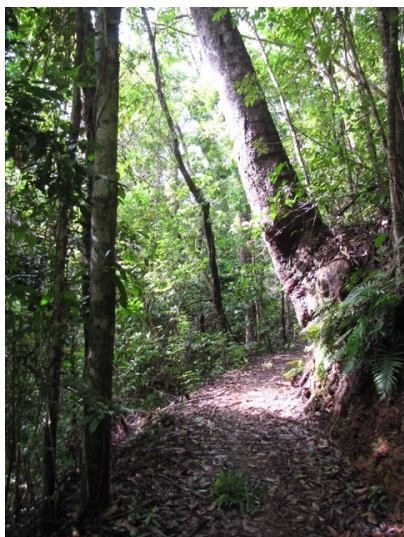
We landed the tinnie on the beach outside the resort at 0830. The peak walk is supposed to be 3 hours and the circuit walk 3.5 hours, depending on which website you look at. High tide was at 1014 so in



theory the tide wouldn't be too much further down the beach from where we started when we returned. Incorporating both the peak and circuit of course took longer and doing them at a pleasant stroll, not only meant that our feet weren't too sore at the end of it but that the tide was further out than we would have liked when we returned. We had to wade through muddy water to get the tinnie out far enough to be able to paddle clear of the reef.



During the walk the cloud had lifted in time to give us a view from the lookout at the top of Mount Kootaloo. The lack of rain also



encouraged the bird life, which called regularly, flitted prolifically but was in the main, way too quick to be recognized. The species we actually saw are:

- Rufous fantail
- Spectacled Monarch
- Orange-footed scrub wren
- Brush turkey
- Female Golden whistler?
- Lapwing
- Beach curlew
- Sunbird

Mount Kootaloo



View from lookout Mt Kootaloo

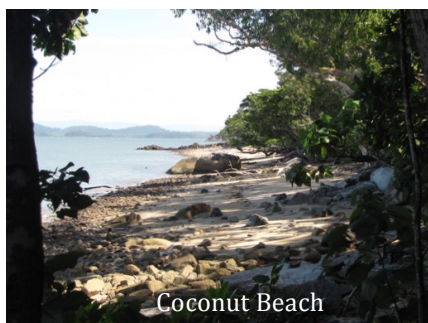


At the top of Mount Kootaloo a lookout gives a panoramic view across to the islands to the south and the mainland. Behind the lookout is the rusted turning mechanism of a 1942 radar tower. No 27 Radar Station on Mt Kootaloo, Dunk Island was built to help ward against the Japanese (the airstrip built in 1941 had appeared on Japanese maps in 1943). In 1945 at the end of the war the radar was dismantled

Up and Over and around (continued)

Wildlife included many unrecognisable butterflies and insects, three snakes (two whip snakes who were that reluctant to get off the path that Andrew nearly stepped on the second one whilst trying to avoid the first, and one other, possibly green snake as it was too quick for a thorough identification), and two cane toads! (Of course there were hundreds of mosquitos as well!)

The track to Mount Kotaloo has some steep-ish sections and our waking sticks came in handy, although on the way down



Coconut Beach

Andrew's was used more as a spider-web deterrent than anything needed to support him down the slope. The rainforest changes its appearance depending on the aspect of the island and one section of vegetation was more like open forest. In the lower sections of the island the vegetation was perfect habitat for noisy pittas, proudly in occupation as pointed out on the interps board at the start of the track; but alas we saw none.



The last part of the track is the same path as the walk to Coconut Beach. After lunch at Coconut Beach we followed this home, expecting a beach walk. It isn't. This part of the track follows the beach just inside the

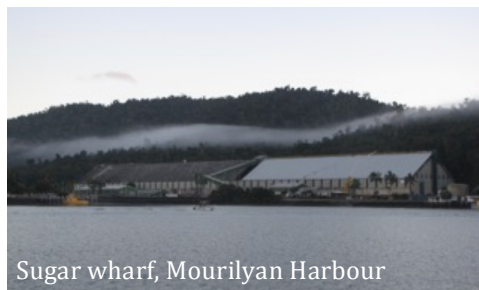
vegetation line, still within various stages of forest, crossing three creeks before coming out into open area just near the end of the resort airstrip. The beach component of the track is only

a few hundred meters long south of the spit at the southern end of Brammo Bay.



Mourilyan Harbour

23rd July 2016. A delightfully sunny day unfortunately meant no wind and despite having the main up, the entire trip from Brammo Bay to Mourilyan Harbour was under motor. We anchored in a very small spot outside the big ship turning circle. The sugar wharf hosted no large ships when we arrived; just two tugs and a rescue boat.



Sugar wharf, Mourilyan Harbour



Sugar wharf, Mourilyan Harbour

Heading up river

24th July 2016. Reading 0.00 twice the depth gauge had us hold our breath but the trip over the Johnstone River bar was quite smooth really. We came in on an incoming tide, motored through the river debris and set the anchor mid stream near the confluence of the South Johnstone River before heading ashore for lunch



Motoring up Johnstone River

Innisfail

Innisfail (Old Gaelic for 'Isle of Destiny') is situated on the Bruce Highway between Tully and Cairns, or for those coming by boat, on the junction of the North Johnstone and South Johnstone Rivers. The town's population of between 7,000 and 10,000 (depending on your statistical source) has a multi-cultural heritage; its people a mix of descendants from European, Asian, Indigenous Australian and other cultures.

Innisfail is known for the biggest collection of art deco architecture in Australia (with many distinct cultural influences). Even if 'progress' has allowed development often facades have been kept where buildings have been

otherwise gutted. An example of this is the small Bunnings. The art deco architecture is predominant because the town was rebuilt after a cyclone in 1918. Since then of course architecture of other eras has built up around these 1920's buildings. Some styles compliment the art deco architecture...and some don't.

Whist at Innisfail we hired a car for two days and did a bit of land-based exploring. (Hiring a car is not cheap; and you have a choice between the official local mob or the local Bridgestone Tyre dealership). Having the wheels we visited the Tully Sugar Mill to the south (page 16) the Mamu Tropical Skywalk to the west (page 17), and the Eubanagee Swamp National Park (page 18) and Babinda Boulders (page 19) to the north.

Our anchorage in the middle of the Johnstone River gave us a great view to town and a clear view to delightful sunsets and Queensland's highest mountain, Bartle Frere. We also had the benefit of enjoying the Friday night entertainment from the local bars from Sengo's front cockpit.

Recycling in Innisfail is tricky. There is one public bin for cardboard and aluminium and nothing for plastic and glass. The council information on the internet states it is not currently viable for the recycling of these materials. Frustratingly, after having our

recycling in the car for two days to try and find appropriate bins, we brought it all back to Sengo and will recycle it in Cairns.



View from Sengo to town



Ebert Island

25th July 2016

It took us a good hour to extract the newly formed Ebert Island from the front of our bridle. Earlier, I had noticed the occupant of the boat behind us extract the weed from around his anchor chain as he left, but I hadn't realised the issue was going to a) affect us and b) be so serious. The bridle had caught a log (or two) and the resultant Island of debris and grass, sticks, and rubbish was significant. After clearing 'Ebert Island' we rigged up the bridle and chain to hang from the bow roller instead of the roller out of the anchor locker. We hoped this would keep the chain relatively clear of debris. Last seen Ebert Island was heading up stream with an incoming tide. We didn't see it pass us on the outgoing cycle.



Clearing Ebert Island from the bridle



Ebert Island floating away

Tully

The Mill Tour

'The Mill Tour' is a 1.5 to 2 hour guided tour of the Tully Sugar Mill; one of only two mills that take guided tours in Australia. The cost is \$20 per person and you must book through the Tully Info Centre. Tour numbers are limited and there were quite a few disappointed people waiting at the counter when we went to pay for our tickets – fortunately I had booked the day before.

The tour starts in one of the original sheds and the whole production process is explained, but before heading out 'onto the factory floor' you are kitted out in a fluorescent orange vest, hard hat, protective glasses, one ear pug and a earpiece/listening unit for the other ear so you can hear the guide over the factory noise.

All the processed granular sugar from Tully Mill is shipped overseas – the only sugar the public gets is a small bag for being part of the tour. The plant is run on bagasse – (waste chaffe from sugar) and this plant produces 19 tonne per year; nine tonne is used to run the plant and the other ten tonne sold back to the grid to power approximately 5000 homes. The gas expelled from the plant is 90-plus percent steam (despite what it looks like – see photo). The waste sludge from the mill is trucked back to the farms as fertiliser for the next crop.

The Tully Sugar Mill has a catchment area of 40 km south, north and west and 10 km east. They expect to process 2,900,000 tonnes of sugar cane in the 2016 season.



The Golden Gumboot

Several towns in the area vie for the title of the wettest town in Australia but Tully officially comes out on top. The Golden Gumboot, built to the town's highest recorded rainfall level (7.93 meters in 1950), stands tall as you enter town. You can walk up inside the boot and stand out on the top. Historic pictures of the town's floods line the walls as you ascend the stairs. The boot is across the road from the sugar mill (the photo on the top right hand corner of this page is taken from the top of the boot).

I am not so sure about the giant frog though; I know they grow everything bigger in Queensland but I hope that it is only a proportional representation.





Pathway to cantilever, walkway and observation Tower.



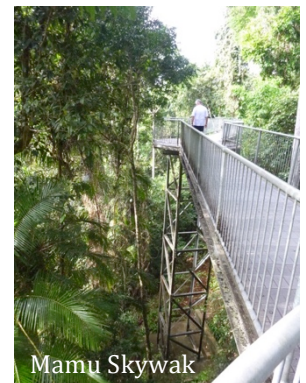
View from the top of the Observation Tower

Mamu Tropical Skywalk

Mamu Tropical Skywalk is on the Palmerston Hwy about 34 kilometers from Innisfail. The property consists of 1100 m of walking tracks a 40m Cantilevered Lookout, the 350 meter elevated Skywalk and the Observation Tower. There is a charge to get in (currently \$23 per adult (but you can get a pass out and return for half price in the next twelve months)). You have the option of taking an audio 'tour' (no extra cost) and listening to recorded interps whilst you walk through the site. There are positives and negatives to this. The positive is that you get all the interesting information relating to the site; some of the history and culture of the local indigenous Mamu People, colourful stories about early European history and individuals, and some interesting statistics on the construction of the structure. The negative to this is that you cut out all of the natural sounds around you. I tried to get a bit of both by only having one earpiece in, but I tended to be distracted from both. We only had an hour and a half here – our time restricted as we needed to get back to Sengo before dark (we hadn't left the anchor light on for a late arrival back, nor had we had any navigation lights or torch with us for the tinnie ride across). I would recommend longer and walk the facility twice. Once with the recorded interps and once on your own, particularly if you are into plant identification (a brochure is provided with numbered points on the way) or bird-watching. There are three shelters where major/concentrated interps boards are provided, and the small walking brochure/map also provides a bit more information



Mamu Skywak



Mamu Skywak



Descending Observation Tower

Eubenangee Swamp



Eubenangee Swamp National Park is located 33 kilometers from Innisfail if you take the main road, or 23 kilometers from Innisfail if you take one of the back roads. Our first alternative to a back road was to be via the Flying Fish Point road, and past the location of the old Johnstone River Crocodile Farm –now closed down. Missing the turn off we ended up at Flying Fish Point; a small community with beach houses, caravan park, shop and clearly plenty of wildlife; there were wallabies in the front yards! Retracing our steps to find the right road we discovered our plans thwarted as the road was closed. So it was back to plan B via Garradunga Road from the Bruce Hwy. The historic Garradunga Pub looked a bit too historic for us – it didn't seem open and we had been hoping for morning tea – so we continued on, admiring the 'tractor egrets' (cattle egrets who are now chasing the tractors churning up the cane fields) and one black-necked stork (jabiru); a surprising but pleasant sight.



The path to the lookout on Bald Hill from the Eubenangee Swamp car park is 1.5 km and initially threads its way through a thin strip of rainforest adjacent the Alice River. There are croc warning signs here but we didn't see any along the river's edge – although we heard from other walkers we had probably walked right past one.

Exiting the rainforest you come upon open grassland. A mown track takes you to the top of the lookout. A different mown track alongside the rainforest is an alternative route back to the car park.

We suspect the lack of large bird numbers was due to the time of day. The 'big' spot of the day however was the crocodile. Our first since getting aboard Sengo and whist he was a fair way away (thankfully) and we didn't see his head, we could tell he was a big boy!

Meet Gregory...

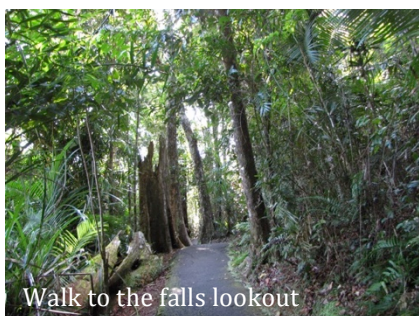
We were told later that this croc is well known in the area and they call him 'Gregory'. Gregory was the name of a croc originally caught in Eubenangee Swamp in 1988 and resident in the Johnstone River Crocodile Park for over 20 years. The owner sold the park in 2008 and eventually it was bought by Louis Vitton to supply their luxury leather goods market. Did Gregory live to a ripe old age? Is this Gregory released back into the wild or did he end up in some exclusive leather goods. Unfortunately we didn't stick around long enough to find out.



Look at the size of that!



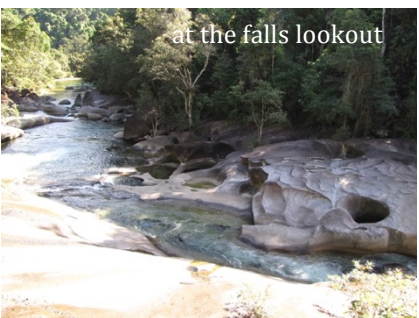
May I introduce Gregory?



Walk to the falls lookout



at the falls lookout



at the falls lookout



The Goldfields Track



The Goldfields Track

Babinda Boulders

Babinda Boulders is a popular picnic and swimming spot seven kilometers west of Babinda in the foothills of Mount Bartle Frere. There is plenty of room to take a dip above the falls area and the area downstream of this is off limits – at least officially, as there were many young people frolicking and jumping in the pools, despite the notices of acceptable space and many warnings that people have died here.

It wasn't quite hot enough for us to consider having a swim but the river did look inviting. The short walk to the falls lookout is a pleasant stroll through lush rainforest. We were accompanied by a couple from Canberra whom we'd met at Eubenangee Swamp. After parting ways, Andrew and I headed off on the Goldfields Track, a 19 kilometre walking trail that leads over the saddle between Bartle Frere and Bellenger ker (Queensland's two highest mountains). We did however, only walk a couple of kilometres before turning back.



At Babinda Boulders

The birds seen on the day that included Eubenangee Swamp and Babinda Boulders were:

Black necked stork
(Garradunga Road)

Tree creeper? (Eubenangee Swamp)

Jacana (Eubenangee Swamp)

Intermediate Egret
(Eubenangee swamp)

Cattle egret (various roadside farms)

Indian minor (Innisfail)

Chestnut breasted mannikin
(Cartright Rd next to the cane siding/flood level)

White breasted wood swallow
(various)

Black kite (Bruce Hwy)

Brahminy kite (Bruce Hwy)

Brush Turkey (Babinda Boulders)

Forest kingfisher (various)

Currawong (E Swamp)

Drongo (E Swamp)

Bar shouldered dove (Branston Beach)

Sunbird (Branston Beach)

Lapwing (various)

Black-faced cuckoo-shrike (E Swamp)

Masked wood swallow
(Garradunga Rd)

Darter (E Swamp)

Pied cormorant (E Swamp)

White-faced heron (E Swamp)?

Dreaming of...



... sleeping in the sun all day



....Dinner

Tiger's gone batty!

29th July 2016

It is a pity I don't have a photo to show for this. Tiger had gone for his afternoon stroll around the deck and was on his way down the starboard side. From my position in the rear cockpit I could see his tail high in the air and the front of his body sloping down near the steps. My assumption was either he was nibbling at my seedlings or, as the plant pots were there, perhaps he couldn't maneuver past them. I went to investigate. His nose was down at the back of one of the plant pots and, not looking any closer, I assumed he was smelling some spilt packet soil. I moved the plant pot closer to the front edge of the step to give him a bit more room to get past. All of a sudden there was a flutter - and something brown appeared. A micro-bat had taken refuge on the back of the pot, Tiger had found him (I suspect wondering what it was) and the, probably terrified, little mammal had seen the opportunity, when I gave it a bit more space, to escape the situation. He emerged, flew past my hands and last seen was flying low over the surface of the water, upstream toward town.

Whale Season

We are happy to report we have finally seen a (1) whale - albeit it was a long way away - we were on the top of Orpheus Island and it was breaching to the west of us.

Whale Count for July: 1

Crocodile Count

We have also finally seen our first croc, albeit not from the deck of Sengo. I expect we will see more of these reptiles as we head further north.

Crocodile Count for July: 1

Winners and losers

I am not sure there were any winners this month. The loser was the boom, which we have discovered has two missing rivets. We will have to be gentle with it before we get it fixed.

Waiting to depart – 31st July 2016

It was raining steadily when we awoke, and checking the plant pots I gather it had been raining for some time. I didn't fancy putting on the wet weather gear just to pick the anchor up and then put it down again a short time later. It wasn't going to be a long journey, just to the mouth of the Johnstone River so we could get an early start across the bar at high tide on the morrow.

I checked bom.gov.au and there was more rain coming through after this batch, although there seemed to be a gap between groups of showers. As it turned out the gap managed to coincide nicely with the time we lifted the anchor, and the motor down the river was mostly dry – some very light drizzle and the start of a shower just as we finally got the anchor set.

The anchorage listed in *Alan Lucas's 'Cruising the Coral Coast'* is very shallow and not very big and there were already three, somewhat permanent looking, vessels there. To give us more space we tried just up river instead, in plenty of water (around the 8 meter mark) and, as the river is quite wide here, about mid-stream. She didn't quite settle in and I suspect the bottom is either full of rocks or, highly likely, trees and debris that has come and settled from upstream. Trying third time lucky we headed across to the suggested anchorage, reconnoitered an area upstream of the existing vessels and anchored, easily and successfully first time, in about 2.5 meters of water.

There is a small swell here, a nice acclimatisation in preparation to get back into the ocean tomorrow: the anchorage upstream at Innisfail had been (not counting bow waves) completely flat.

Innisfail - A summary

Innisfail is a bustling rural town with all the services we required. It has both a Coles and Woolworths supermarket but the better vegies (although a smaller range and slightly more expensive (bar the beans that were half the price) can be found at the Central Market – where an independent store is in the mall behind Woolworths. Of course, if you have a car and are exploring there is a fruit and vegie roadside stall a few kilometers north (and one south, closer to Tully). The ability to 'do' coffee is mixed. The Coffee Club gave me a flat white (at best) with chocolate on top when I asked for a cappuccino, yet the bright yellow home wares store and café, 'Giallo', out on the northern fringes of town knew what they were doing. Of course you'd expect to get good coffee at Oliveri's – an Italian deli in the centre of town that has been run by the same family, in the same building, for over 70 years.



Apparently (not personally inspected) the library has the cleanest public toilets. Fresh seafood is sold in at least two city locations (on the Bruce Hwy). There is no chandlery as such but there is a 'marine shop' catering from new and used small powerboats to a small amount of accessories. There are engineering shops, plumbing shops, liquor stores, bakeries, and what seems to be a large amount of chemists. It even has a Target, which we were surprised to find open on Sunday afternoon – nothing else was. Essentially, Innisfail has just about anything that you could need in a town

I suspect the average income makes this a town of lower income demographics. The average asking rental for a house is in the \$250-\$300 range and I saw the cheapest accommodation advertised for backpackers for \$78 per week (I saw \$60 per week in Tully). I would pop in here again, even if it was only for supplies; the only caveat is that the bar crossing and one small section of river has to be timed with a high tide.