

Aboard Sengo

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May 2017

Cleaning Up!

Oh so much dirt!

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Sunset Mindil Beach

A lot of Hard Work

May was dedicated to cleaning, scrubbing and provisioning but we did get a few breaks, finding ourselves at (in a round about way) markets, marshes and musicals.

Darwin: The Big Clean!

We have discovered that a white boat is never, unless you have just cleaned it, actually white. We spent hours scrubbing Sengo, removing the in-ground black snow pollution off her decks that had settled in over the Wet. By the end of May however, Sengo was dirtier than ever as with the Dry the burning season starts, and she was covered in ash!



Ironically it was almost safer to leave your boat in Darwin over the 2016/2017 Cyclone Season than elsewhere in the country (Cyclone Debbie having ravaged the east coast in April). Cullen Bay Marina is relatively protected and clearly the winds weren't tragic. As a poor piece of handyman responsibility, these pliers accidentally got left on top of the boom before we left – and they were still there when we returned – the only difference: the handles are weathered that much that the yellow plastic used to be blue.



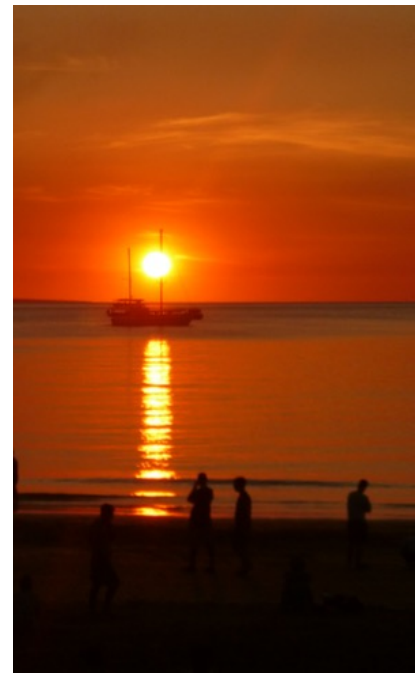
It is amazing what water and a sponge can achieve, or on the other hand, it is amazing how much dirt was on our mesh. The almost onyx coloured water is from one sponge down across one side of the front cockpit!

However, as much as these newsletters are a record of our activities whilst we travel around, even I do not wish to look back and read in great detail every itemised action of cleaning up 'Sengo'. So subsequent to say May 2017 is a shorter newsletter than normal. We tried to get away and have a break from cleaning when we could, or more specifically, when we could no longer cope with the heat, and visitors gave us five days solid respite. Our 'other' activities for May included: seeing crocodiles at Corroboree Billabong, being in awe of iconic airplanes in the Aviation Museum and mingling with the masses at Mindil Beach. We also included a bit of culture one night as we attended the opera. AND we even managed a bit of socialising – but not with caravaners – we are back to boaties; catching up with *Blessing* (ex *Backbeat* – see Aboard Sengo December 2016), *Sea Lynx* (thanks for dinner!), *Ophelia* and *Capricorn III*.

Mindil Beach Markets



Sunset Mindil Beach



Sunset Mindil Beach

6th May 2016 (Sunday). The Thursday night Mindil Beach Markets are sort of an institution in Darwin but they happen on Sunday nights as well, albeit on a slightly smaller scale. This doesn't stop thousands of tourists milling around the food stalls to get something to eat before heading to the beach to 'do' the sunset.



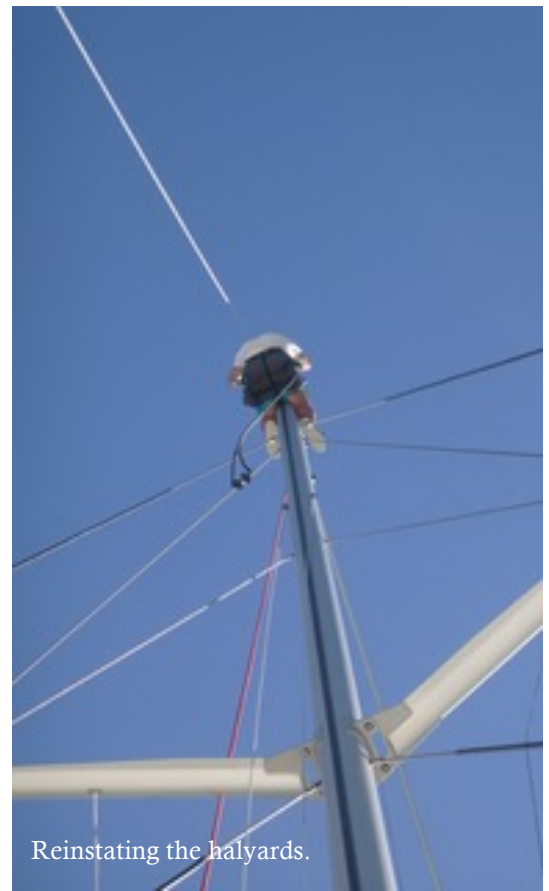
Sunset Mindil Beach



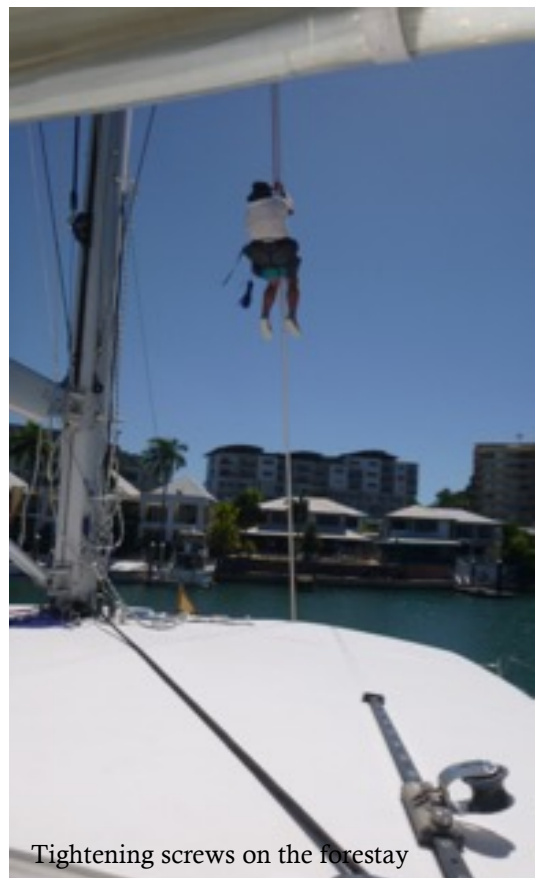
The Emperor's new clothes



10th May 2017. After scrubbing the deck, the halyards and sheets (ropes) could be put back on and then the main and the genoa sails could be reinstalled. Andrew went up in the boson's chair to re-mouse the halyards and make sure all the screws in the genoa track were appropriately screwed in ready for sail installation.



Reinstating the halyards.

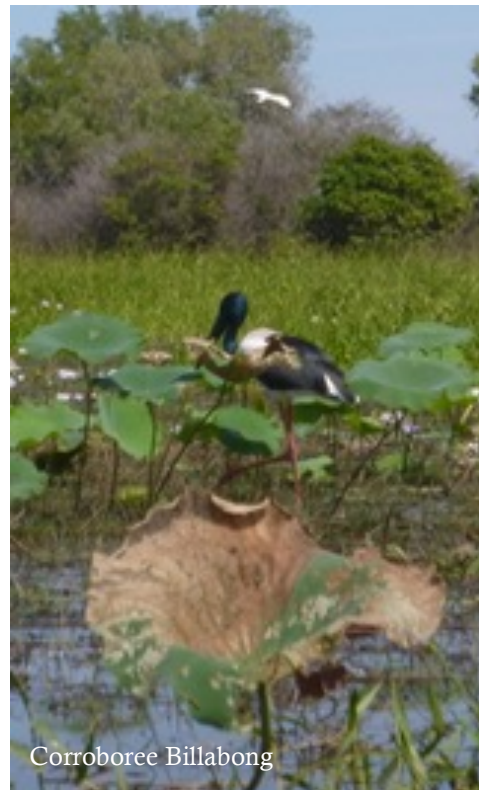


Tightening screws on the forestay

Lunch with the Crocs: Corroboree Billabong



Not easy to see: there are two freshwater crocodiles on the bank in this photo

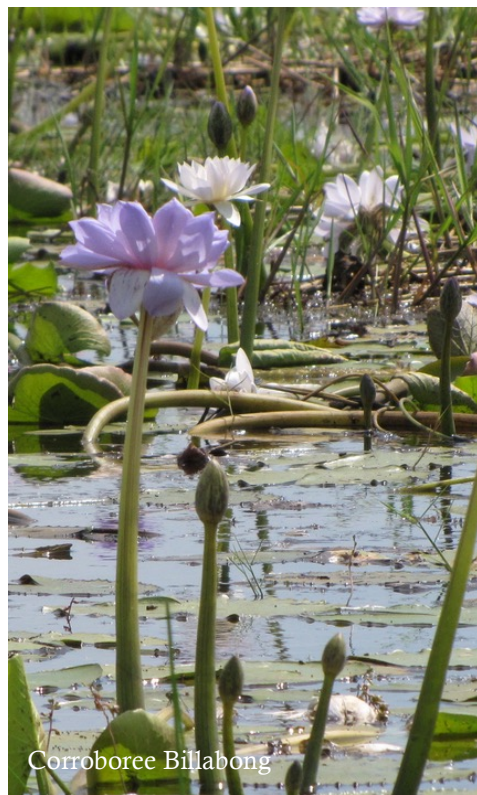


Corroboree Billabong

14th May 2017. Corroboree Billabong is part of the Mary River wetlands around an hour and a half from Darwin (according to the brochure), and 20 kilometers off the Arnhem Hwy. The boat ramp is popular with fishermen and commercial operators operate sightseeing and houseboat hire from here. We took the 2.5 hour lunchtime cruise with Wetland Cruises. Lunch is basically a salad, cold sliced meats and a bun. (My gluten free option replaces the sliced meats with a quarter roast chicken) and endless water is supplied to keep you hydrated. Of course being a tourist trip the first thing the guide was specifically looking for was crocodiles. We had of course seen a few in the past year or so, so sat back to enjoy the experience. We ate lunch nosed up to shore within sight of two freshwater crocodiles (who were happily snoozing on the beach) before the tour headed off for the rest of the wildlife experience.



Corroboree Billabong



Corroboree Billabong



Corroboree Billabong cont

Birdlife was prolific. Flying jabirus were great to see, night herons, stilts, pacific herons, pied cormorants, darters and many more. The colourful wetland included sections of lilies, some native, some Asian imports and several saltwater crocodiles



The Darwin Aviation Museum

20th May 2017. The Darwin Aviation Museum on Stuart Highway doesn't look like much from the outside, just a few small aircraft around a concrete field and a big tin shed. However, that big tin shed houses the only B52 of its make on display in the southern hemisphere and one of only a few in the world as most of this model was required to be destroyed as part of the nuclear disarmament agreement between the US and Russia and the destroyed planes lie guillotined on American soil. Around the *B52G Stratosphere* are exhibits including an iconic Tiger Moth, a spitfire replica, a couple of war time American helicopters and the remains of a crashed Japanese Zero. The interps is good (minus a few editing errors) and generally gives an overall history of the planes/machines and then the history of the specific items on display. Some of this information can be found at <http://www.darwinaviationmuseum.com.au>.

There is also some footage of the bombing of Darwin and lots of interps related to people in the industry (pioneering female pilots for instance) and of course the bombing of Darwin and Australia's role in several wars as well (Manbulloo Station gets a mention (see *Aboard Sengo April 2017*)). We didn't stay long enough to read everything.

The B52G Stratosphere on display was a gift (on permanent loan) from the US Government to Darwin and was built in 1959.



This little Sabre is a mongrel (or more politely put on the interps boards: a 'composite'). It consists of three different airplanes; the front is original, the rear of the original sent to the US to be used as a template so the rear of another plane was attached (the front of the other plane whereabouts not mentioned) and the wings are of a Mk.2.

A night at the Opera

And it was free! 20th May 2017. The minor frustration of the night at forgetting how to put up our Happy Cloud seats (much to the amusement of the crowd around us) was a minor distraction to a very pleasant evening's worth of opera. (Andrew did get his Happy Cloud up enough to give him a backrest but clearly we need practice). The Darwin Waterfront puts on weekly free events in season and it just happened to have the Darwin Symphony Orchestra playing a selection of songs from well-known operas. Labeled an Opera Gala the singers were Cheryl Barker (AO), Bradley Daley, Jacqui Dark and Warwick Fyfe and they recited pieces from 15 operas and musicals (including a great rendition of the Geelong AFL Club theme song – sorry, the song they based it on: *Toreador* from *Bizet's Carmen*) You could bring a picnic, and many did, No alcohol was allowed (although I don't think this particular crowd would have overdone it) and many set up chairs and picnic rugs. The event started at 6.30pm. We shared this experience, being joined by *Blessing*. The fireworks show went off at 8.30pm. It was a great night!





Hitching up for the last time



Unhitching for the last time

Farewell little caravan

In May we hitched our little caravan up for the last time and unhitched it at the Coromal Dealer, who hopefully will be able to sell her on consignment. Of course if she doesn't sell, we will need to fly back to Darwin at some point to pick her up.

Hidden Valley Holiday Park

With regard to facilities, the Hidden Valley Holiday Park has got to be the best caravan park we have stayed at. It was not the cheapest, but the site we had for our end-of-road-trip stint was perfect. Whilst in amongst other sites, site 114 was shaded all day and the tree cover a haven for



honeyeaters. Orange-footed scrub fowls strutted around during the day and the mournful cry of the bush curlews could be heard at night. There were also a few bats. The pool area is inviting with palm trees and lots of shade and we did go for a swim several times, when we actually had the energy. (you could sit on the plastic lounges and do a bird count by the side of the pool if you wanted to). As mentioned in December's Newsletter they are not a pet friendly park but clearly use discretion (there was an eclectic parrot in a van diagonally opposite us). The staff is friendly and the location is halfway between Palmerston and Darwin.



24th May 2017. Barnacles Shmarnacles. There really wasn't a lot of growth on the Sengo's hull despite 6 months of non-movement. Her location may have helped (a lot of freshwater runs into this bay) but we think the International antifoul helped as well. There were plenty of sea lice/worms however; and we had to hose Andrew down thoroughly as he came out of the water covered in them.

Whilst Sengo doesn't have air conditioning, Cilla and Tiger, whilst hot, were visibly more comfortable back on board Sengo than they had been in the caravan. There was of course more room to move, more hidey holes if they were feeling unsocial and their routine has got back to some sort of normality – which means I am now getting a better regime of sleep: they were waking me up in the caravan to be fed four or five times a night!



Sometimes dinner-time became a little hectic and Tiger wouldn't wait to be fed on the ground. The confines of the caravan proved interesting in juggling cat feeding areas and general movement.



There was only water in this mug. I'm not sure what Cilla would have thought of Gin.

Crocodile Count: Whilst not officially back sailing we did see a few crocodiles this month; albeit as part of a tourist tour at Corroboree Billabong: There was also one freshwater crocodile at The Territory Wildlife Park (not reported on) Croc Count for May 2017: 7 (3 freshwater and 4 salties.)