

Aboard Sengo

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July 2017

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At Porosus Creek

Where there is croc...

You have got to expect some crocodiles if you anchor up a creek whose Latin name means 'Crocodile'.

July was filled with art, scenery, rocks and crocs.

July's itinerary was roughly planned at the beginning of the month but changes invariably happen and Plan A's, B's, C's and D's were often invoked. Regardless, our visits were still predominantly to the more popular 'tourist' spots of the Kimberley range

Jumping the hump

1st July 2017 Glycosmis Bay to Jims Bay. I love it when an anchor sets first go! (unlike our last little effort – see Aboard Sengo June 2017 - where the bottom was at an angle that the anchor couldn't take), this afternoon's bottom was perfect – 1.4 meters under the water surface (the tide was due to drop 1.2m) and of clearly, good holding.

Having decided that we couldn't be bothered trying to find the alternate track up the escarpment in Glycosmis Bay this morning (Aboard Sengo June 2017) we settled down for some boat maintenance for a few hours before the high tide 'trigger' to leave across the bar from the inner bay. I started on yet another rust run; I have never seen the boat so salty!

The exit from the bar, despite the fact we had a track, was quite hairy, the rockiest we have been for a long time, the depth very low, despite it being high tide (we were coming into neap tides), the wind still from east-north-east and the waves would have had a fetch of several hundred kilometers. It was most unpleasant and I don't have photos as my small camera battery was charging (and I wasn't risking my big one outside in those conditions). Cilla, appropriately, got herself curled up on the top bookshelf adjacent our bed and didn't move. Tiger on the other hand started out on a lounge area couch but ended up on the floor, squashing himself as close as he could to the flokarti rug (he loves the texture) after losing his breakfast (well, it may have been his morning tea). He wasn't at all comfortable but seemed a lot better when we stopped, even though we were bouncing around a bit.

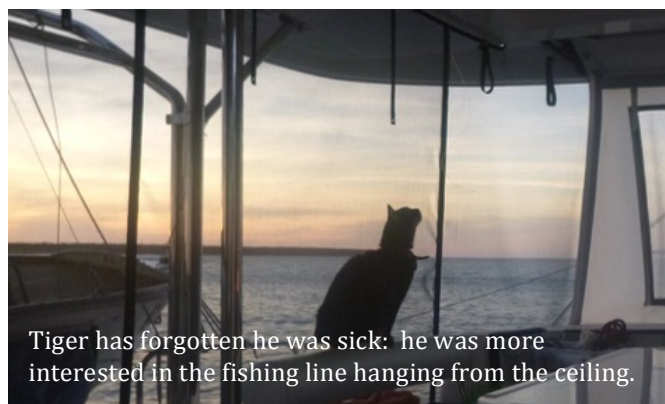
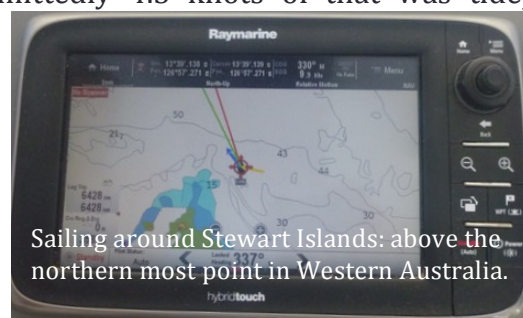
2nd July 2017. Jims Bay to Cape Talbot. There are many valid reasons why it is suggested that you travel around Cape ('washing machine') Londonderry at night but we have just done it in the middle of the day - in four hours! This part of the coast is notoriously windy and the tides from



Morning: Glycosmis Bay

one side of the Cape (the northernmost point in WA) and the tides from the other side converge north of the Stewart Islands, just north of Cape Londonderry. All this can result in a very uncomfortable trip. The idea for traveling at night is that, usually, the winds drop off and the trip is 'gentler'. Whist I do admit that there was at least one upset stomach on board this trip, that was extremely early on when the waves were just that bit too big to be called smooth, but that bit too small to be called rough, and clearly just right to upset someone's sense of balance. The wind was almost from due East, got to 15 knots True and for a while we were doing 10.1 knots speed over ground (admittedly 4.5 knots of that was tide).

Anchor was up at 1200, at the top of the tide at Lesueur Island. The anchor was down at 1600. The wind was down to 10 knots and the swell was very gentle. Turtle count 2 Croc count 0



Napier Broome Bay

The last bit of civilisation... ...at least for a while.

3rd July 2017. Cape Talbot to Mission Bay. Today would have to be one of the slowest sailing days I think I have encountered. We awoke to discover that the wind had swung to the south (finally –we had been expecting this for the previous few nights but it hadn't happened) and then shorty after to the southwest. We were (technically) on a lee shore (but a fair way out) but more specifically, we were getting the fetch of the waves and the swell all the way from Mission Bay, and whilst the rock wasn't tragic (the wind wasn't that strong), it was time to move. Our original idea had been to head to the Governor Islands a little south of us, but they were open to the south, so looking further afield we looked at the possibility of stopping at Mission Bay or Honeymoon Bay. The other option, the Sir Graham Moore Islands, should afford protection from most winds, and they were closer. So, putting up the main and genoa we headed west (ish) instead of south at a riveting 2 (ish) knots. However, the wind kept changing and in order to keep in vaguely the right direction (there was no question we were going to have to tack (at least twice) eventually) we set ourselves at sixty degrees to the wind and were angled north west. We were angled that far north-west at one stage that extrapolating I worked out, had we kept going, we would have missed the Cocos Keeling Islands and ended up on the coast of Africa, at either Kenya or Somalia (neither of which has a great reputation for welcoming small boats). Instead of tacking we took a Chinese gybe (spun 270 degrees around the other way) and found ourselves heading south. This is where it gets interesting. The wind was now clocking further to the South West and if the Drysdale River had been a bit deeper we may have ventured into its tail. We Chinese gybed again so as to not hit the top of the Governor Islands and found ourselves heading west again (ish) - the direction we originally wanted to go. Now the wind changed to clocking north. So changing direction again we headed south. Honeymoon Bay was out of the question as it opens to the north west. As the likelihood of the wind swinging to the south overnight was strong (at an unknown strength) we eventually decided to tuck in

behind a headland in Lee/Mission Bay. I don't know if we had an audience putting the anchor down as there was a family fishing on the point. Once stopped, we sighed with relief. We had taken 8 hours to get around 25 nautical miles, traveling at speeds ranging from 0.6 knots (all of that was tide) to 5 knots (for the briefest of moments). And we were exhausted.

4th July 2017. A rest. It is hard to explain why one is tired after such a smooth sail but yesterday's impact was more of extended exhaustion rather than physical exertion. A rest day for us means a bit of work as well. I continued the rust run, wiped down some of the decks for the smoke that had accumulated, and we soaked the spinnaker lines in fresh water. Our showering had to be timed well - we shower on the back deck and a couple (and dog) had come down to do some beach fishing. We left it as long as possible but in the end went for it - I would rather half shock a couple of individuals than be showering in the dark outside in croc country.

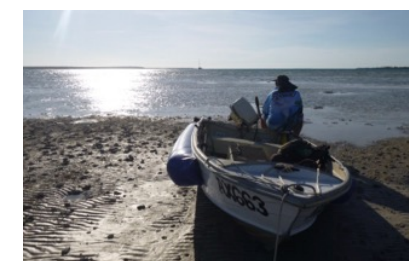


Sunrise: Mission Bay 5th July 2017

5th July 2017. The morning consisted of reading a bit, completing a rough wash down of the top deck, reading a bit more, soaking couch covers, reading a bit, laying out the soaked spinnaker lines to dry on the tramp, reading a bit more - anything to break the monotony of 'housework'.



Just before lunch we moved anchorages to be closer to our afternoon excursion and at about 1330 we headed off to land. Our aim was the Pago Mission – established in 1908 and abandoned in 1937 due to lack of water - apparently. I read that all that was left was some ruins and a mango grove. Our trek in from the beach passed a small hut named ‘Graceland’s’, where a notice asks you at the next road junction you are required to report in before exploring further on this patch of ‘private’ land. There was no one home when we passed so that was impossible but instead of just wandering around we dutifully kept to the track back to the beach. I was disappointed to see the area littered with old beer cans but these are small pieces of rubbish compared with the 44 gallon drums left to rust and disintegrate, presumably left by the army as they abandoned the site after it was used as a radar station in WW2. There was probably more evidence of this but as we had not told the owners we were here we did not wish to trespass too much. We spent the next hour or so bird watching at the beach and waiting for the tide to come in. At least this time we expected to wait. The tides of the day were such that we always knew we were landing on a receding tide and I’d timed it that the tidal equivalent on a rising tide would be about 1630, about the time we needed to get back to Sengo before the sun went down. The water was at least very clear so there was no chance a croc was going to sneak up on us. Soldier Crabs scurried around to avoid our feet when we took a stroll up the beach and two stingrays had been obvious when we had first landed. Condensation had formed on Sengo’s deck over the past two nights and I had noted it was a smidge muggy. This morning the sky was full of cloud but to the north they seemed to burn off after a while. To my surprise, when we arrived at shore we noticed rain clouds were forming on land and to the south when we left it almost looked like it was raining in the distance. Are we through the Dry Season already!



The bird count for the afternoon excursion: Red browed pardalote, singing honeyeater, beach curlew, eastern curlew, reef heron, white faced heron, pied cormorant, sea eagle, noisy friarbird, red capped dotterel, pied oystercatchers (and a couple of terns: no positive identification.)

Honeymoon Bay and beyond.

7th July 2017. Well, we finally made the Governor Islands, albeit anchoring in the dark at 1830. Yesterday morning (6th July 2017) we had motored around to Honeymoon Bay (there was no wind) to discover another catamaran already anchored there. A walk on the beach to the west had us meeting some of the campground patrons and when we returned along the beach we ran into the other yachties returning from a trip to town for fuel with Joy, one of the park manager’s (and chauffeur). For a fee one of the managers will take a yacht into town to load up on fuel (and supplies if needed (there is a small supermarket in Kalumburu -with suitably inflated prices)).

We had a look around the camp, bought a cold Coke and chocolate bar from the office and said our farewells; we had really only come to shore to check out the site. However, thinking this is probably an opportunity that should be taken we spent the afternoon emptying our jerry cans into our fuel tanks and arranged for Joy to take us into town the next day.

Kalumburu is a 30-kilometer drive away on a dirt, non-graded road so it naturally has its ups and downs, but as 4WD tracks go, it is fairly tame. The town is actually based around the Kalumburu Mission, well established by the 1930’s on the King Edward River. Fuel is available and you can get a takeaway snack at both the fuel stop and the

Sunrise: Mission Bay 6th July 2017

Honeymoon Bay Camp Ground

Sunrise: Honeymoon Bay 7th July 2017

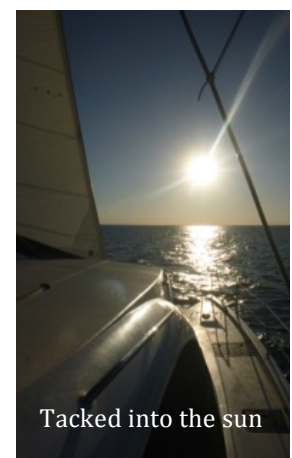
establishment attached to the grocery store (cum hardware store, cum kitchen supply store). I was delighted to see a bag of potting mix and nearly bought it (WA has laws about bringing soil across the border and my poor plants had suffered water only for weeks before I could obtain some local (but mineral deficient) substrate for them (and, of all things, it looks like the mint isn't going to make it). Potting mix would have been great. Except that it had 'Darwin' written on it. Kalumburu supplies come via barge from Darwin and whilst clearly the authorities give a bit of leeway here (with not only soil and seeds but fruit and vegies normally forbidden to cross into the state) I

don't think I would have gotten away with the excuse down south ('but I bought it in WA'). The vegie fridge had dwindling supplies (apparently there was a lot more greenery there the day before) but I was after fresh apples. And yes I know they come from the NT but there is nothing like fresh(ish) apples (particularly after you've been living on canned fruit and vegies for three weeks!). Fuel got, apples and a couple of dips and cheese in the bag, we headed across to the Kalumburu Museum.

The museum is part of the Mission and is a brick/stone building built on the remnants of the Boy's Dormitory. It is small and the displays are divided into sections. There is an information book at the front door that has an overview of each section of the museum. There are sections on the early days of the mission, the area in the war years (it was bombed by the Japanese despite the fact that 'Mission' was painted in large letters on the roof), displays of tribal artifacts from the area collected and used before the existence of the mission, examples of artwork and artifacts/equipment from other tribes across the country and, bearing in mind this is a Mission, quite a lot of historical religious artifacts that belong to the diocese. Apparently the museum is going to take Michael Atkinson's craft recently used in the retracing of the crashed German Aviators (see Aboard Sengo June 2017) but I don't know where they are going to put it – possibly outside? There is a cover charge of \$10 but I was happy to pay this. The set up isn't overly professional but I've seen a lot worse (although there were

two audio visual screens that looked interesting. Unfortunately they weren't working and we didn't have time to see what was on them anyway as we were working to the timelines of our driver.

Because Lanco (Joy's husband) was taking a fishing charter, her preference was to be back at camp around 0900 or 1000. As it happened we were a little later than this, but the preferred timeline meant we started the day at 0630. Between transporting the filled jerry cans back to the boat and checking emails (by piggybacking on someone else's satellite internet) and the afternoon sail, which started in Honeymoon Bay at around 1530 with 10 knots of wind but ended at 1830 at the Governor Islands with around 2 knots of wind (we motored the last couple of miles as the wind angle was on the nose and the sun had gone down), it was a very long day.



Tacked into the sun



West Governor Island

West Governor Island

8th July 2017. Having downloaded the next weeks weather predictions last night the decision for today, at least, was to sit put – there was no, or very little wind, predicted and we don't want to motor if we can help it. Andrew's thought, if he got the enthusiasm, was to go fishing, but the elusive enthusiasm didn't arrive. There was absolutely no wind until early afternoon and because of that the sun was extremely hot. We had discovered yesterday (thanks to our 'borrowing' of someone's satellite internet connection', and thanks to an email from KCCYC (Kimberley Coast Cruising Yacht Club), that in May the Wanambal Gaambera Aboriginal Corporation had decided to enforce a paid for permit system to visit sites on their land. The permit had to be applied for online (and paid for) before entering the area - and the area started in Vansittart Bay – the next bay over! Thankfully we were able to sort this out with a couple of days to spare (although if anyone asks to see our permit they are going to have to settle for a photograph of the computer screen, because clearly, we had no printer to print it out on). I am not necessarily against paying to access someone else's land but there were only two duration options, 10 or 20 days. This doesn't restrict us being in the

waters for longer, but it does mean we need to plan the next part of the journey so we see either as much as possible or make sure we see what we think are the more significant sights/sites. So after breakfast we sat down with some charts and the .pdf that was supplied on the website to mark in the spots we were allowed to access and land. There were no specific lat/longs but most of the sites have been described in the guides we have. The tricky bit will come when we wish to visit sites that are not described as the permit only allows you a leeway of 200 meters around each site. That done we thought we would keep going as the Dambimangari people also have stipulations about where you can land, although they aren't charging for them. Their specific sites have lat/longs on them and I thought I'd downloaded the list. Well I had, to a certain point, except that the list is in decimal points, not degrees and minutes, so putting these sites on a chart is not so easy. Having forgotten the conversion method we left this task to another time.

Being so hot we turned the rest of the day into a 'rest' day. So, as usual, a rest day became a day with chores, although it was really only a bit of washing and making some bread for me. Andrew's main job ended up chasing our horn issue but we discovered late in the day the issue might just be in the mast so the final conclusion would have to wait for proper daylight when I will hoist him up in the bosuns chair.

In a scene mildly reminiscent of Kevin Costner's *'Waterworld'*, Sengo was visited by *'The Smokers'* at around 1530. Two solid runabouts appeared from around the point, carrying at least five people each. They were loud, they were arguably very drunk, and they were heading straight for us. We played numb. Whist they may have seen Andrew's silhouette sitting in the back cockpit, they may not have seen mine sitting inside in the bridge deck. Fortunately they did not circle us, but they did run past us in both directions at very close proximity several times. We are normally very welcoming to strange boats, but not a bunch of drunken yahoos when we are 8 nautical miles from help. Fortunately they gave up and left

10th July 2017. It took us 2.5 hours from when we lifted the anchor up at West Governor Island to when we finally put the anchor down at Sir Graham Moore Island, unfortunately half an hour of that was disproportionately trying to get a secure bottom. We had waited until the afternoon northerlies had come in (today they had come in around 1200) and then headed off west to our projected anchorage. At one point we were sailing pretty close to the wind at around 35 degrees but the wind was of sufficient strength, and the tide favorable, that our SOG (speed over ground) reached 8 knots. Mostly however it was around the 5.5 to 6.5 knot mark and the trip was not long (9 nm). When we got here however we found the bottom consisted of very fine grey green mud and we

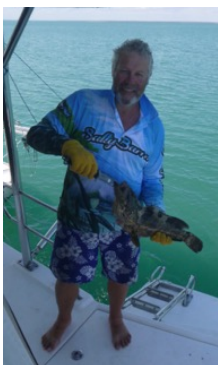
struggled to get a hold. Third time lucky, with a fair bit of chain we settled in.

Yesterday, as there was no wind, we had gone fishing. Our 0900 start was later than I wished and we headed off around the southern most point of West Governor Island throwing a line (with lures) around the shallower areas of reef. Andrew's first strike was a rock (just after a shiny silver fish had grabbed my lure but released it) and we spent a minute or so extracting it from the reef. Just as we thought it had come free though it snagged again, this time on a small rock cod. No photo was taken but he was let go to swim another day. A bit further around, adjacent a rocky outcrop with sea eagles and osprey nests, we had the interest of a school of large silver fish (trevally or queen fish was Andrew's guess) but whilst they circled and swam under the tinnie a couple of times they didn't take a lure. It was further up the west coast of West Governor Island that Andrew got his strike and a short but vigorous fight ensued. The result was Andrew: 1. Golden Rock Cod: 0. Lunch delicious.

In the afternoon tinnie ride we explored up the east coast of West Governor Island, discovered the islands are joined and you don't want to try and sail between them and noticed another cat heading our way. When we got back to the boat we turned the AIS on but clearly didn't leave it on long enough. The boat anchored in the main anchorage (we were in the small bay at the southern end of

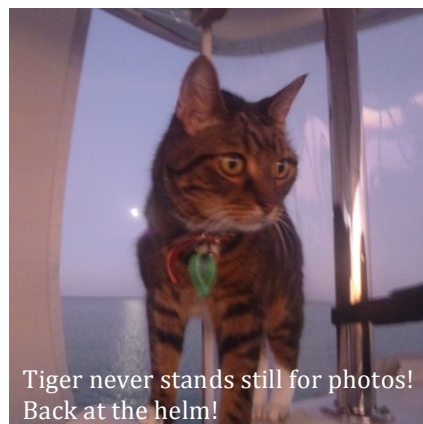
the island) and thinking they didn't want to be social (they hadn't anchored where we were) I turned the AIS off. As it turned out, they did try and call us, and not having any response came over for a quick chat (with a greeting from another boat) this morning. Unfortunately with our 20 days permit access to the next section of the Kimberley starting tomorrow we had determined we needed to jump today to Sir

Graham Moore Island if we wanted to be at to Jar Island tomorrow afternoon – we were moving at lunch time so had no time to socialise further

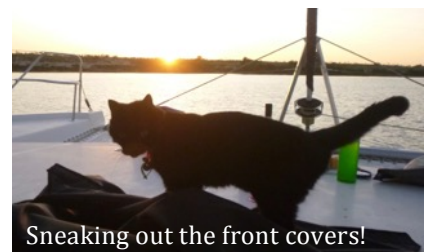


Bird list Napier Broome Bay

White Bellied Sea Eagle
Wedge tailed eagle
Brahminy kite
Back kite
Whistling kite
Pied oyster catcher
Sooty oyster catcher
Pied cormorant
Darter
Bronze-wing pigeons
Red-tailed black cockatoo
Reef heron (white morph)
White faced heron
Pacific bac ducs
Osprey nest?
Torresian crow
Singing honeyeater
Beach curlew
Eastern curlew
Noisy friarbird
Red capped dotterel
Red browed pardelote
Silver gull
Red winged parrot
Mudlar
Pied butcherbird
Peaceful doves
Brogas
Straw neced ibis

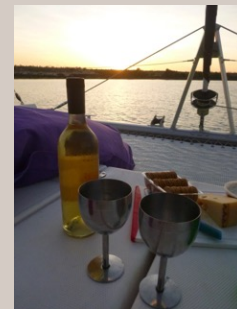


Tiger never stands still for photos!
Back at the helm!



Sneaking out the front covers!

We took our beanbags out onto the front tramp to have a 'howl at the moon party' (it was going to be a full moon). We should have been facing east as



there was an incoming tide, however, clearly, local conditions and a very small amount of wind overcame this vector and kept us facing west. We saw the sunset but not the moonrise. Not to worry, maybe next month – and mango wine, cheese, dip and crackers made for a pleasant evening.



Full Moon



West and East Governor Islands



Vansittart Bay

Jar Island

11th July 2017. Sir Graham Moore Island to Jar Island. We managed a ripping 11.4 knots through the passage between Mary Island and the Mainland, past the infamous 'middle rock' (that isn't in the middle) and south toward Jar Island. All going well we would be at our destination well before lunchtime. Whist we had started lifting the anchor at 0715, the sails weren't up until 0800 because the very fine grey green mud that was on the bottom of the anchorage stuck to every bit of chain it could and I spent the majority of the time pulling up the anchor just cleaning it – and even then I missed some. We left with good time and just as we got to Jar Island the wind dropped off dramatically and we went from 9 knots down to close to 4. To access the anchorage at Jar Island you have to negotiate between the island and the pearl farm and this wasn't particularly hairy (we were at high tide after all) but putting down 60 meters of chain to start with is always a risk as it takes so long to pull it up again if we have to retry. After a heart stopping drag across the bottom we were fortunate that the anchor set, and set well. Lunch was had and we went off to explore one of two known aboriginal art sites on the island. It did take



us a little while to find the 'path' – more a goat track with spinifex and unknown surfaces below squashed and spiky vegetation but heading off to the left when we found the track led us to overhangs that produced quite a lot of art; deteriorating to different degrees but some still remarkably vibrant.

12th July 2017 This morning we thought we would have a look at the Northern Rock Art Site on Jar Island. And we nearly didn't make it. The wind had been blowing such that there was a distinctive swell clashing regularly with the tinnie on the way over and Andrew's worry was that we were going to be getting out on a surf beach – a wet and dangerous occupation. Before he turned around, I convinced him to have a look at the beach – we were almost there – and the conditions didn't look too bad. We were on a rising tide and we pulled the tinnie up a few meters above the line of the surf.

We weren't expecting to be that long – the blurb indicated that this was where the tourist boats go and the explanation of the track seemed simpler. I was therefore expecting a smaller site than yesterday. The track from the beach over the rocks is very easy and there is a very definite well-tramped track through the first patch of spinifex to the first of the rock outcrop area with art on it. After this there are tramped tracks to various degrees and the grass has grown back over some of them. We had 'an explore' – keeping to the 'tracks' and found some more art. We didn't explore everything, the grass got too thick, or the obstacles too unknown under it, so we headed back to the tinnie around 1030. The tide had come in more than we expected and yes the surf had come in over the gunwale. Andrew bailed a bit and we both got soaked almost to the waist getting back in. The tentative and roller coaster ride back to Sengo wet us more but Sengo was out of the main part of the swell. Just as we were getting out of the tinnie we had visitors: a pair of Tawny Sharks (*Sea Lynx* had mentioned there were Tawny's at Freshwater Bay). Both these sharks were larger than the one I caught in Escape River (See Aboard Sengo October 2016) but they grew bored with us and they disappeared after a couple of laps of the boat.





Around lunchtime ***Ocean Dream*** turned up in the anchorage, and shortly after this we departed. I was surprised at the ease the anchor came up, the quickest and cleanest raising of the anchor for quite some time. Our destination was Freshwater Bay and after following the track back out around Jar Island to avoid the pearl farm we put the genoa out. When we had made the decision to just put the genoa out, it was blowing around 17 knots apparent and we figured we probably didn't need the main up. When we actually got

in a position to put the sails up, it was blowing a bit less, and the sea was lumpy and uncomfortable. We persisted with the genoa only, much to Andrew's disappointed description of us 'wallowing slowly' and reverted to putting the motor on a couple of times to avoid the pearl farm (as the wind was blowing us on to it). The Cruising Guide and the KCCYC notes both have notes on how to access the small bay on the south coast line of Freshwater Bay that is the 'known' anchorage; the most pertinent of instructions being to sail south of the pearl farm boundary. Whilst there is explanation about the buoys and floats being hard, if not impossible, to see in rough or dark conditions they don't mention anything about looking into the sun. The sun of course is in the west, the heading was west, it was mid to late afternoon, and we couldn't see a thing. Fortunately we had radar and we picked two radar reflecting buoys up as two very small blips. (one was useless as it was on a perpendicular boundary). Heading for the buoy

we could 'see' we then extrapolated, missed two out of the next four markers using the binoculars but came to anchor calmly, alone, in the stipulated anchorage. Andrew's comment later that this anchorage compares to any in Karingai Chase National Park (north of Sydney) was apt. I didn't take any photos but the scene was not 'typical Kimberley' - instead wooded slopes down to rocky shores with a couple of small 'beaches' If we had explored there are a couple of freshwater creeks here that are accessible with a scramble when the tide is high enough, Andrew noticed the typical reflection of a pair of eyes when it got dark in the bay so we know that there was at least one croc. We took a day's rest here, the wind was too strong for comfortable sailing and whilst I hoped I would get some chores done all I really achieved was a half completed job of cleaning the anchor well).

Admiralty Gulf

14th July 2017. Although it was forecast to pick up in the afternoon, the morning wind was light, perhaps a little too light, when we departed Freshwater Bay on our way to Parry Harbour. Trying to keep the wind angle right so we didn't run into shallow ground, we eventually got offshore far enough to drop the genoa and put the spinnaker up. This worked - up to a point - and the aim was to sail around the top of Bougainville Reef and into one of the anchorages at Parry Harbour. Unfortunately the wind died out completely and we ended up motoring around 4 hours, with or without the genoa depending on the strength and consistency of the wind. ***Pacific Infinity*** was anchored when we arrived (we had seen this boat in Vansittart Bay anchored near the DC3 site) as well as a smaller monohull who had started behind us (they were south of us coming up Vansittart Bay as we exited Freshwater Bay) but who cut the corner by sailing south of Bouganville Reef. If we knew we were going to be motoring we may have taken the same route). Anchor down around 1500 in around 9 meters of water.

Around The Osborne Islands

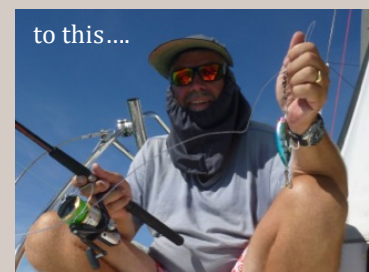
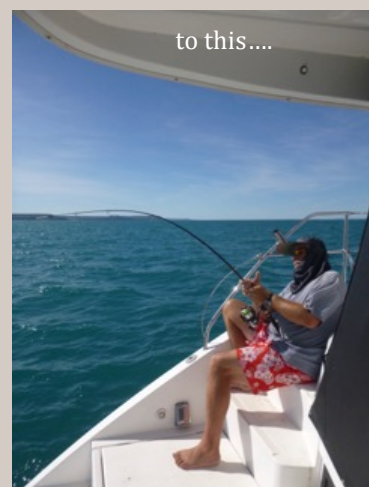
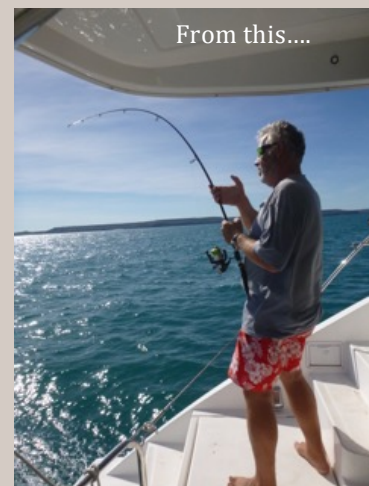
When we gatecrash someone's breakfast and steal someone's food, we should expect someone to steal it back!

15th July 2017. I started pulling the anchor up at 0650, we were sailing at 0710, albeit slowly, and we started the 8 nm trip across Parry Harbour into Admiralty Gulf to continue our journey. The wind was light, and for a while got so light that we turned the engines on (ten or so minutes). The predicted wind for the day was below 10 knots for the morning and then easing in the afternoon. We had 26 plus nautical miles to go today. We needed the wind. As with the pattern of wind we'd seen for the past few days, the wind started south east and slowly made its way around to the north east, which was perfect for us as it meant we just had to adjust our direction occasionally, no tacking or gybing required. The wind picked up, but thanks to the direction of the waves, the conditions were delightfully flat. We were doing over 7 knots in a very comfortable sail.

Up ahead there was frenzy. Birds were diving and fish were jumping. The area was quite large and we were going to sail straight into the middle of it. I apologised aloud for disturbing the feast and then suggested Andrew throw a line in. Too late to set up the game rod, Andrew grabbed the rod I usually use, complete with its blue and pink lure and ...BANG. He had a fish. I will give both Andrew and the fish credit – Andrew was running this with his non-preferred hand (the reel was set up for me) and the fish was not happy. Forty minutes, several nautical miles and one exhausted

husband later and the fight was *still* going. The fish had its first, second and third wind and didn't seem it was going to ever give up. When we thought we had it reasonably close, I got myself up high and looked out. My guess was Tuna – Andrew's guess thirty five minutes earlier had been Tuna – just by the way it was fighting. I got the net ready, the gaff ready, the bucket with sea water in it ready, the knife ready, gloves ready, and set up the table for a possible 'filleting'. At forty-one minutes however we knew we were going to lose it. Two 'teenage' bronze whalers (a guess, I wasn't going to get that close) decided they would pay us a visit. Cheekily swimming right up to the back of the boat to let us know they were there and then easing off again, they made Andrew fight another five minutes before they took their breakfast. (I got it on video – well as much as you can from our angle). Andrew was hoping they would leave him the head so he could get the lure back. They didn't leave the head. But we did get the lure!

It wasn't long after all this excitement that the wind died down – completely. We furled the genoa and dropped the main and put the engines on. Occasional bursts of enthusiasm had the wind up enough to put the genoa out twice more but we weren't putting the main up. By the time we got to the Osborne Islands we had no sails up, motored around the pearl farm (pearl farm workers were busy in a more southerly bay) and had the anchor down around 1500. Croc count: 0. Shark count: 2





Rock Formations, Rock Paintings, Rock Walls and an Oasis

16th July 2017. Lots of exploring activities in the Kimberley rely on timing the tide so you can access, and retreat from, whatever cultural, natural or historical site you are visiting. Today's high tide was around 1445 so, waiting for the recommended half tide we didn't end up leaving Sengo until 1100 - after a few chores, and further investigation of the horn issue (still not resolved).

There are four sites close together listed in the guides we had, all on the mainland and a mixture of cultural or natural phenomena. The new permit system has two sites stamped in the area. Because the stamps aren't specific and everything is so close we are assuming the access is for all four sites. The noted areas on the islands however do not have stamps on them on the website schematic so we passed on them.

Our first stop was a site labeled in the guides at The Apartments. The Apartments are caves eroded into the sandstone with interlinking passages. The cool tunnel like crevices would have afforded great protection to anyone living here - away from the searing heat - and possibly shelter from the drenching rain in wet season. There is some artwork here as well. The Apartments are still home to a few creatures: we saw geckos, ants, huge dragonflies, spiders and two types of bat - one small black micro bat went flying past, and a couple of what looked like ghost bats. I also think I got bitten by a mosquito! The path to The Apartments was like others we have recently encountered, marked with cairns but generally over flattened spinifex; which means you have to be very careful where you put your feet - you may be stepping down onto hard ground, solid or wobbly rocks or into ankle breaking crevices.

It took us a while to find the next stop - as it was a matter of waiting for the tide to access

further up the creek The site is cairned at the rock paintings, known in our guide as 'The Birds'. A short way up stream from this, over shallow rocks is a rock wall. Beyond here is Buzzard Falls and beyond that is a rock bridge. All we saw was one very small waterfall but it wasn't Buzzard Falls and whilst we found the large billabong (which was gorgeous) we had to pass before heading for the falls and rock bridge, we were conscious that we had tied the dingy up on the top of the tide and we didn't have much leeway in the depth of some of the rocks. I was a bit enthusiastic at one stage and disturbed a pair of brotgas which weren't all that far in front of me. Had I known they were there they would have made a great photo.



17th July 2017. Day 2 of our stay in the Osborne Islands anchorage didn't quite work out as we had planned. Firstly, the morning breeze was a bit more than just a breeze and getting the tinnie down, let alone motoring off into it, would have been decidedly uncomfortable. As it was we were also

convalescing as whilst we hadn't broken an ankle on the spinaflex covered ground, we had had a couple of tumbles with the odd scrape. Add to this Andrew's unfortunate incident of standing up in The Apartments when the ceiling wasn't high enough and a small slip further up the river

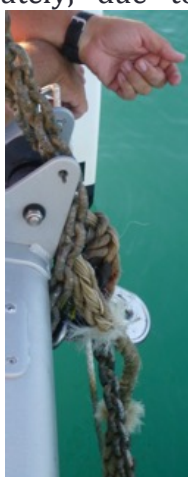
meant he was nursing a sore neck and sore and grazed knees. There are several other things to see in the area adjacent The Apartments and an historic wreck over on Middle Osborne Island. We will have to wait until we visit next time to tick them off our list.

Mitchell River

18th July 2017. There was not a lot of wind predicted, at all, for the next few days. Our decision to move on as the timeline on our permit was pending (20 days is not really long enough) meant that to catch the predicted (minimal) breeze we had to start really early. We planned to get out of bed at 0500 and to have the anchor up by 0600. We expected to have around 10 knots of breeze. At 0500 (the sun wasn't up) there was no breeze at all. Nothing! Nada. Zip. Okay. What is Plan B? Do we stay here an extra day, see the missed rock formations and aboriginal art work or do we motor across the 33 plus nautical miles to the Mitchell River?

We were protected by land on all sides to some extent so the decision was made, after the morning cuppa, to lift up the anchor, exit the Osborne Island group and see what the wind was like in Admiralty Gulf proper. If there was no wind we would anchor off Steep Head Island for the day and head across to the Mitchell tomorrow. If there was wind, then we would head across to the Mitchell River today. This is how it worked out....

We were already starting a bit later than originally planned and at 0615 I started to lift the anchor. Unfortunately, due to tide and wind the bridle had wrapped around the anchor chain like a snake tightly coiled around the branch of a tree. We tried to alleviate this situation by doing a couple of 360's to unwind the chain but it didn't work so we ended up rigging the spinnaker line up to take the weight of the anchor chain over the bow roller (at the front of the Sengo) and maneuver the bridle clip off the chain from there. (Of course then I had to fiddle with the lines to get the bridle clip back in its spot in the anchor locker). One hour later we headed out of our anchorage. We motored down the extent of the first pearl farm and put up our main sail as we turned the corner to head north-west toward Kidney island. We then turned south west again, keeping to the edge of the channel to avoid the reported reef and didn't turn the engines off until we cleared Carla Island



and turned north west, still having to avoid a second pearl farm patch. We had deemed as we had come out into the bay that there was enough wind to make a go for the Mitchell River. Unfortunately this bout of wind was the best we had all day. I usually plan on a worst case scenario of 5 knots for journey planning. Had we got five knots we would have anchored around 1300 but the wind dropped off to exceedingly small numbers and changed direction to come from directly behind us making our trip slow and laborious. There would have



been no point putting up the spinnaker – we would have got the same result. Ironically we got some of our best speeds coming south through Walmesly Bay into the Mitchell on the last leg of our journey. The anchor was down at 1700. It had been a long day.

Croc count: 0, Manta Ray count: 1 (flying out of the water), Dolphin Count: 1 (feeding frenzy). Shark count: 1 (Tawny – saying hello to the back of the boat on dusk).

Andrew catches his first Barra and the croc count is astronomical.

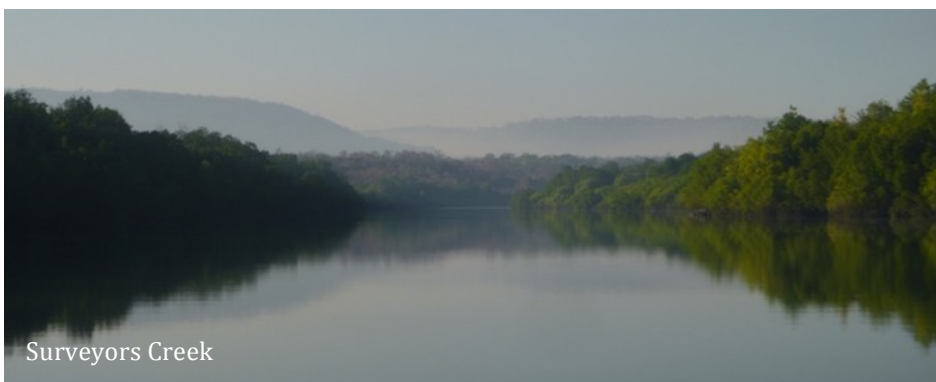
19th July 2017. Cilla is back into her habit of waking me several times throughout the night, asking for food even if she doesn't eat any. I was awoken at 0100, 0330, 0430 and 0530. It was on this last iteration that I noticed we had neighbours. The sky was still dark but the blaring of lights indicated a ship had come in and anchored slightly upstream of us. It turned out it was **True North** and whilst I was stumbling around about 0600 making a cuppa, they were already taking their paying guests out for the start of the day's excursion – seated in several large metal runabouts and heading for Surveyors Creek. There is a large expanse (very large as it turned out) of sand bars and drying sand flats upstream from Middle Rock and the guide suggests you wait for the following low tide after anchoring at Middle Rock to assess whether you are going to move further upstream (an anchorage point has been noted) or explore the area by tender. However, low tide was in the middle of the day, the next high tide with enough water would have meant we were motoring in the dark so instead of waiting, we left shorty after this morning's high tide and took a punt. Neither the guide book nor the chart plotter have the mangrove covered island indicated adjacent Surveyors Creek and working out it was a bit too shallow on the creek side of the island to pass, we finally found an appropriate hole on the opposite side to anchor in. Anchor was down at around 0900. Low tide was at around 1230 and we thought it prudent to wait for the rising tide before exploring. It turned out it wasn't only prudent it was necessary as even in the tinnie we found we had minimal water below us. Plan A was to explore Surveyors Creek but the guide says this should be done at high tide. So Plan B was to head further upstream to explore Seabird Creek first and then come back later to explore Surveyors Creek. As it turned out we were still too early and we didn't get all the way to the rocks at the end of Seabird Creek – a diminishing water area and depth had us quite croc wary and we had already seen one (or two). So Plan C, instead of heading back to Sengo after this was to head upstream. This we did at a gentle pace, wary of depth (although upstream from Surveyors Creek there is mostly good water depth) and we got all the way up to where the river split. The branch to the right looked promising for fishing.

The branch to the left I knew was going to lead to the rock wall and further up into the Mitchell River Gorge.

As it turned out, the right hand branch was good for fishing and there were jumping, bubbles and splashes everywhere. Now all they had to do was take a lure. Eventually we were rewarded and after months of trying on the North East coast last year, Andrew finally got his first Barra. I was expecting it to fight more than it did. The fish was legal size and thoroughly delicious. Once we had our prize we headed further upstream, weaving our way through the rocks and temporarily tying the tinnie up for a quick stroll. I thought it would be lovely to do the walk up here – this is the Mitchell River after all, and the plateau and falls beckoned. Maybe we would think about it tomorrow. We had a rising tide but it was getting late and at 1530 we headed back to Sengo. With regular abundance, the helicopter from **True North** came hovering up the river, no doubt with passengers who don't wish to exert themselves. At one point I saw a different helicopter but I am not sure where they were from: **True North** was the only ship in the river that we saw.

Upon sailing into the Walmsley Bay and the Mitchell River the day before we had noticed the burning on the eastern side of the peninsular and so far been fortunate that the smoke had not affected our exploring. I had however been swatting away flying wisps of ash all afternoon and when we returned to Sengo her decks were not only covered in pinky brown ash, but long strings of black shavings (you can't just pick them up, they disintegrate in your fingers).





Surveyors Creek

It seemed like a good idea at the time

20th July 2017. Plan A this morning was to take Sengo upstream on the high tide to within a nautical mile or so of the navigable limit of the river and then take the tinnie to the rock bar before midday and walk up the gorge to the Mitchell Plateau. Because of the timing however, this would involve securing the tinnie for a cycle of a drop in tide. Plan B was to take Sengo up to the navigable extent of the river and wait for the next appropriate rising tide cycle to walk to the Mitchell Plateau. This is reportedly a 3 hour (ish – probably for us ‘plus’) return walk and the next rising tide cycle would have meant a 0600 start. Plan C prevailed. Plan A was going to mean a rush, and Plan B a very early start and both would have meant an extra day or two up the Mitchell River. Conscious of the days running out of our access permit we took an early morning tinnie ride to Surveyors Creek instead.

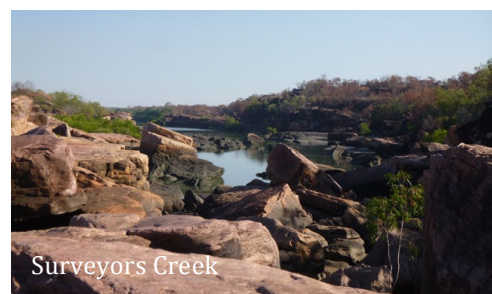
We arrived at top of the tide, tied the tinnie up where we knew there was enough water to sustain it for a short while and headed upstream. The walk is relatively easy, with a few big steps thrown in for a bit of a challenge. We ended up walking into the gorge above the set of rocks the water tumbles over to reach the creek, the falls at the back of this are the ones you see in promotional pictures, and further up the creek, after some rock pools is a second set of falls. Unfortunately because of the timing the sun was not yet shining all the way into the gorge, and because of our time restrictions we didn't climb to the top for a better outlook. As with many places I would love to come back to this place earlier in the season when there is more water running over the escarpment. It was just as well that we cut our exploration short as when we got back to the tinne she was a little lopsided – the back of the boat was sitting in the water having dropped with the tide, the front however was angled impossibly up – the plastic tubing we had originally put around the gunwale to stop it

marking other boats had got caught on the rock edge on the dropping tide. This would be a great place to spend some time bird watching but after a few minutes rest we headed back to Sengo.

Of course it was now a dropping tide but I had worked out if we were quick in packing up we



Surveyors Creek



Surveyors Creek

could motor back over the sandflats downstream of us with about the same water level that we had had on the way in (this did entail getting down to a depth of 0.4 meters). At 1045, at Middle



Surveyors Creek

Rocks we turned the motors off although the wind was extremely fickle and I don't remember when we've tacked so much. At 1245 Border Force (33) finally caught up with us. By this point the wind had died down and the angle had changed so much that there was no way we were going to be able to run a straight course. Because of our location we came to the realisation we weren't going to be anchoring in daylight. Our original plan had been to head to Kriat Bay. 'Barracuda Bay' was closer but both these options had shallow waters, reefs to negotiate and were basically open to the north. When we got high enough to tack west the wind had swung to the north and had picked up pace. Plan C was head for Lafontaine Island, which, on paper anyway, seemed to hold a bit of north protection. When we got to the point of having to make this decision (i.e. if we were going to the island we had to tack now) we

realised that we were going so well, and the ocean and conditions were wonderfully calm (that good, I'd actually made a batch of muffins earlier) that, as we weren't going to anchor in the light anyway we may as well head for the Voltaire Passage and anchor behind Cape Voltaire. This spot should be protected from the north, east and south east, and should cover most of our options.

When we got there however, the patch of dark blue (shallower sea) is small, is deeper than you think and is surrounded, on the land side, by fringing reef. (We couldn't find the two shallower patches on the electronic chart). The note in the guide said that the person who had anchored there had done so close to the reef, something you wouldn't (couldn't) contemplate at high tide and something you certainly wouldn't do in the dark. The depth didn't get shallow enough for us so we decided to head south. Several



Sunset: Cape Voltaire

options were in uncharted waters, again something you don't really want to do in the dark and so eventually we anchored on the western side of Wollaston Island, in 11 meters of water (on a rising tide so the depth was going to go up) at 0130. Sleep in tomorrow (sorry, it is now today!)

Toward Swift Bay

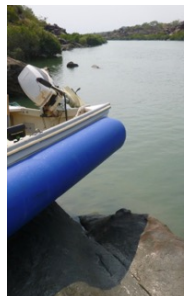
Oh, for the lack of cairns... but at least we got a walk in the spinifex.

23rd July 2017 On the 21st of July we slept in – sort of. After our 0130 anchoring, Andrew was perhaps entitled to his sleep in of close to midday, I however got up at around 0730, having had three hours sleep during the sail the night before. It was a lazy day, we were exhausted, and the only serious activity was moving Sengo into an anchorage below Winyalkan Island.

Although our original plan had been to head to Swift Bay, the necessity of the night before had seen us anchoring at Wollaston Island and the closest bulk art on the mainland to this was in the creeks and escarpments of Winyalkan Bay. There was art on Wollaston Island and Dog Ear Island but this would have involved a fiddly tinnie ride so instead we moved to an adjacent bay in an area friends had marked at 'best art' in our guide. The plan was to spend a couple of days exploring here before moving on. We awoke on the 22nd July and followed the rising tide down Four Man Creek. Down here there is a painting of 'four men in a boat', similar to one further in the Kimberley that is claimed to be one of the oldest paintings in the country. On the way there is a creek which if apparently you motor up at high tide you can see animal paintings on the rocks from

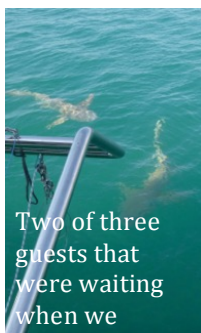


your dingy. We weren't far off high tide but not close enough and we couldn't get through the mangroves, so we thought we would try on the way back. The instructions for finding the section with 'four man and a boat' weren't bad, I just think we both had our distracted, non-focused hats on and we couldn't find the artwork. We did find footprints – and followed them as much as we could but clear artwork wasn't forthcoming. After a frustrating time and



deciding we weren't going to find the site we returned to our tinnie to find she was *a little high and dry*. By this time of course the

tide had dropped further than we had hoped and after struggling to get the tinnie back into the river we tried for the 'large kangaroo' on the main creek, drifting past the area whilst eating our lunch. We couldn't see this either and of course we were too late to retry the creek we'd tried at the beginning of the day. Back out in the bay we tried one beach where we read there was good artwork not that far away but I



Two of three guests that were waiting when we

guess we zigged instead of zagged and all we found was one

degraded Bradshaw remnant.

Feeling discouraged, not to mention hot

and dehydrated, we headed back to Sengo.

On the morning of the 23rd we thought we would tackle the area where the 'best art' was supposed to be. So on a rising tide we anchored at the easiest looking spot (a small beach near the point) to discover that perhaps access was not possible from here, and better access was possible from the less likely looking rock edges further along. We had spent half an hour searching for a way through and in the end gave up.

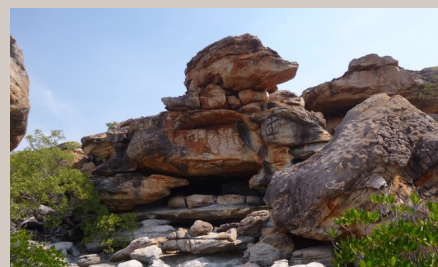
Swift Bay

Back at Sengo we pulled the anchor and finally headed for Swift Bay – a distance of around 10 nm as the crow flies but about 20 nautical miles by sea. Anchor was down in the east bay of Swift Bay around 1400. Not to miss an opportunity we lowered the tinnie and headed for the beach on the inside of the northern headland of this bay. Cairns gratefully lead us to an art site we could recognize but it is quite degraded (although several styles are here spanning possibly thousands of years) and compared with what we've seen previously, we were a little disappointed.

24th July. Swift Bay. Today could reasonably be called a full day. On the morning tide we headed up Art Creek to take in two sites of

aboriginal painting of various dates (including Bradshaws) and after moving Sengo to the west part of Swift Bay we headed off for two more art sites, one of which was a burial site. (The individual is still there). This person must have been someone of some importance; the artwork here is prolific and detailed.

All sites were easy to find, two just off the water, one up a rock edge and the last one had conveniently placed cairns for guidance. We were back on board Sengo by 1500 and we were exhausted.



Art site behind mangroves, Art Creek

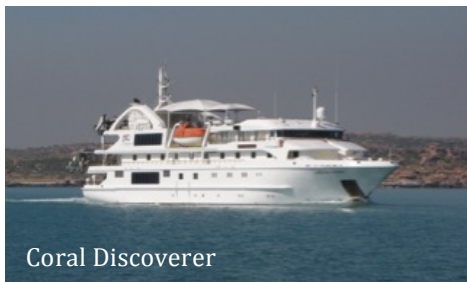


Art site below edge, Swift Bay West

Bigge Island

We always knew we were doing the 'APT' tour... and then we joined one.

25th July 2017. It wasn't until around 1030, just after we'd finished the second of two walnut and lime muffins, that the wind came up and we could turn the engines off (for two and a half hours at least). The anchor had been raised around 0730 (ish) with relative ease but there was no wind. We raised the sails anyway, in anticipation, and headed out of Swift Bay under motor, slowing down to practically nothing for a few minutes to fix the sum log; which had clearly clogged up in the previous eighteen or so hours as it was reading 0.00. We had awoken to find **Coral Discoverer** anchored in Swift Bay East but they must have had their excursion early as they passed us around 1015. It wasn't until we got closer to our destination that we noticed they were anchored in Wary Bay, but they left as we were coming around the top of Bigge Island. Our 'sail' had been not as efficient as we had hoped



Coral Discoverer

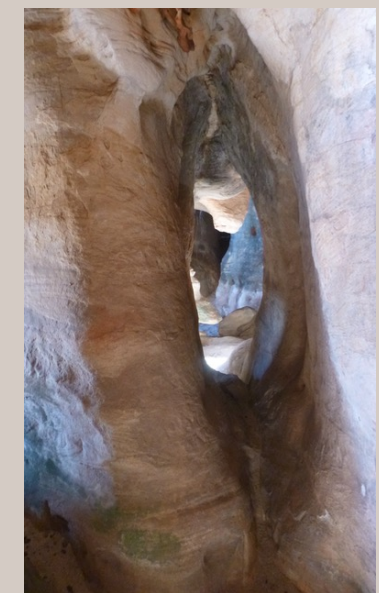
and we arrived mid afternoon, on a dropping tide, and with a large reef around the edge of the bay we thought it not a good time to go exploring. There were two obvious beaches and as I



was unsure which beach we were going to visit in the morning (for some more aboriginal art) I was hoping that a tourist boat would arrive to lead us in. **Eco Abrohlos** sailed past in the dark and headed south. It looked like we were on our own.

You never know what you wish for. 26th July 2017. High tide

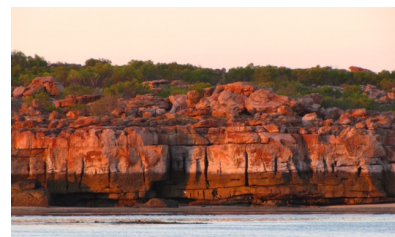
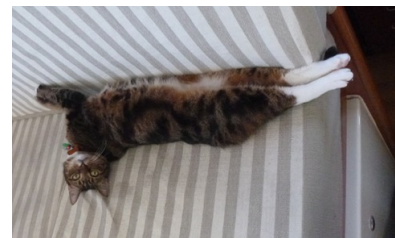
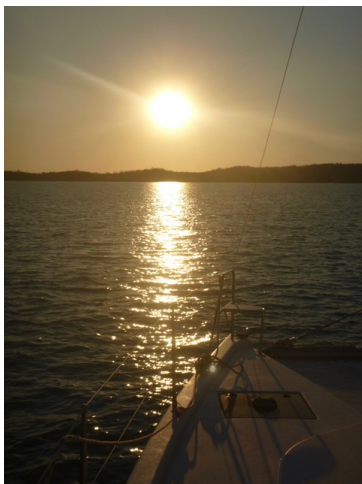
was at 1232 and we knew there was no point heading to shore before the incoming water had sufficiently covered the reef to get the tinnie through. We had breakfast at our usual time and to fill in the time we greased the bike wheels (which should have been done in Darwin). As we were having our morning cuppa a ship approached from the south. It was a rather large boutique ship. Her name is The **Caledonia Sky** and she is an APT boat. APT is a tour company that markets itself toward the well appointed, well fed, well 'watered', and 'easy access' excursion demographic (its clientele is probably averaged in the sixties – we know – we have been one of their trips). Hence, as we were following, in principle, the standard tourist route, and seeing all the major attractions, we had dubbed our path as following the APT Tour. The **Caledonia Sky** holds 114 people (with 75 staff!) and of course their morning excursion was to the very places we were heading. We watched with curiosity as the staff and guides



made their way across the reef to set up for the coming hordes. Around half an hour later we joined them on the beach; several groups having already arrived, and each group taken between the sites of artwork, caves and burial site, to overlooking a ceremonial site that was only for men of the local tribe. The artwork here is a mixture; hand paintings, drawings of ships, and depictions of what was described by the guides as Europeans with smoking pipes. There were people everywhere, and not all following the instructions of keeping their hands off the side of the walls unfortunately. We managed to actually converse with a few, the first conversations we've had apart from each other since a quick chat with

Angel Wings on 10th July. All were interested in us 'living the dream' and there was a couple from Ballarat who, if they had known, said would have brought us some fresh fruit (which I thought was lovely) and one woman who knew the St Andrew's Hotel quite well (our old local pub).

It was 1100 by the time we got back to Sengo and there was no wind. Tomorrow's forecast for this location was similar so there was no point waiting around. On an average speed of 5 knots we should have got to our expected destination of Kartja Island. We didn't get it and ended up tucking into an anchorage in an uncharted section of the bottom of Bigge Island (we had seen *Eco Abrohlos* anchored here earlier). The highlight of the 'slow' motor sail was seeing three humpback whales (our first). Dolphin count 3.



Hunter River

Fortune favours the brave.... But only if you are prudent!

27th July 2016 I started pulling the anchor up at 0645 and by 0700 the sails were up and the engines were off. During most of the day the true wind speed was under ten knots but we managed an efficient and smooth sail, mostly in the 6's and 7's. The engine briefly went on for ten minutes in Prince Frederic Harbour as the wind temporarily dropped (just as we were passing *Eco Abrohlos* but I think that is only a coincidence) before the breeze got its 'second wind' having changed completely from south east to north west. We

sailed up the entrance to the Hunter River pulling the sails down completely only when we got to the entrance of Porosus Creek.

Our first choice of anchorage was near where the river shoals but the wind was still strong enough (12 knots), and coming directly up the river, to be uncomfortable. We have a sketch given to us by a fellow yachty that says there is a hole much further up the river. We were on a dropping tide but we thought if we could at least get past the shoaling then we could go for the hole tomorrow. The result was that we got past the drying out marked on the chart but entered an area not deep enough for the drop in tide and we were still in the fetch of the winds and waves. Prudence



being practiced, we turned around, motored back into the wind and up Porosus Creek, anchoring below two other boats. Before going to bed I grabbed the spotty for a croc watch – Porosus is Latin for crocodile, after all. After being surprised at the hundreds of baitfish that were suddenly jumping around the boat in the light, two sets of reptilian eyes reflected back to us in the dark. Croc count: 2.



A day's sojourn up the Hunter.... It was supposed to be an overnight trip.

28th July 2017. It was lucky I was not naked! I woke up at the usual time, before sunrise, took a couple of happy snaps of the escarpment, got distracted with the condensation on Sengo's decks, (there was enough water on the deck for me to start to clean the smoke and ash off) and I didn't notice the fishing tinnie motor past until the last minute. There was an exchange of waves before they went by but it wasn't that boat that would have worried me. I hadn't actually heard the tourist boats come around the corner and ten rubber ducks filled with people descended on Porosus Creek. Of course this was probably only half the paying guests, there were four helicopters doing the 'scenic' thing passing over us on regular basis as well. The mother ship - L 'Austral' - all 495 feet of her had come in last night, and was anchored just around the corner off Naturalist Island

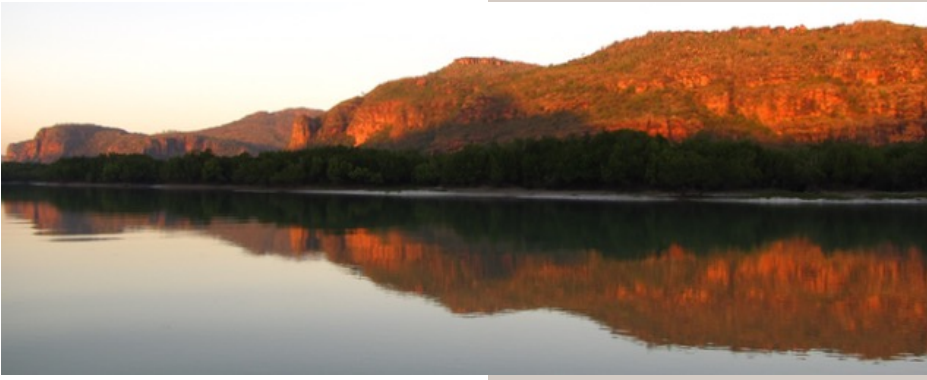
To continue on with Plan B, our trip up the Hunter had to wait until the tide was sufficient to allow us to travel upstream. We were probably about ten minutes too early in our calculations and we did hit bottom twice - but floated off in a few minutes. We eventually found the 'hole' listed on the mud map we'd been given but it was far too small to be comfortable - three times the size would have made Andrew much happier and he didn't want to stay overnight. This meant we had to traverse back down the river before the tide ran out. Our temporary anchorage was at the point where the river joins from two arms, the left (looking

upstream) headed off to Donkin Falls, the right eventually to Hunter Falls. Both unfortunately had rock bars and a necessary climb to access them. We just didn't have the time. We took the Donkin Falls arm to its extremity in the tinnie, took a ten-minute break in the shade before heading back. When we got back to Sengo we spent ten minutes traversing the other arm but we were running out of time. We had a quick lunch before lifting the anchor and heading back down the river again. Ironically, we found a larger 'hole' just around the corner that we may have been tempted to anchor in except for two things: one, we had our minds set up for Plan C - to get back to Porosus Creek - and two, we needed to make water. Porosus Creek water was acceptable (just - at least the bottom end of it) for this task, the water up the Hunter River was not; the muddy swirl was disgusting. Two more 'falls' that will have to wait until next time (Andrew is seriously considering via a helicopter) Croc count: 3.



The system works! For reasons that don't need to be explained here, AMSA's (Australian Maritime Safety Authority) RCC (Rescue Coordination Centre) in Canberra had need to contact us today. We'd had our AIS off for a couple of hours but clearly their system had our last known reported position up Porosus Creek. **M V Anya** was the only other vessel here - she is large and has her AIS on all the time. The RCC contacted **Anya** (as Andrew's phone was turned off and we need our satellite access on to receive calls) and asked if they would mind passing on a message. I was a bit stunned to see one of **Anya's** tenders arriving in the dark around 2100 at our back steps. Just as well we didn't stay up the Hunter tonight!





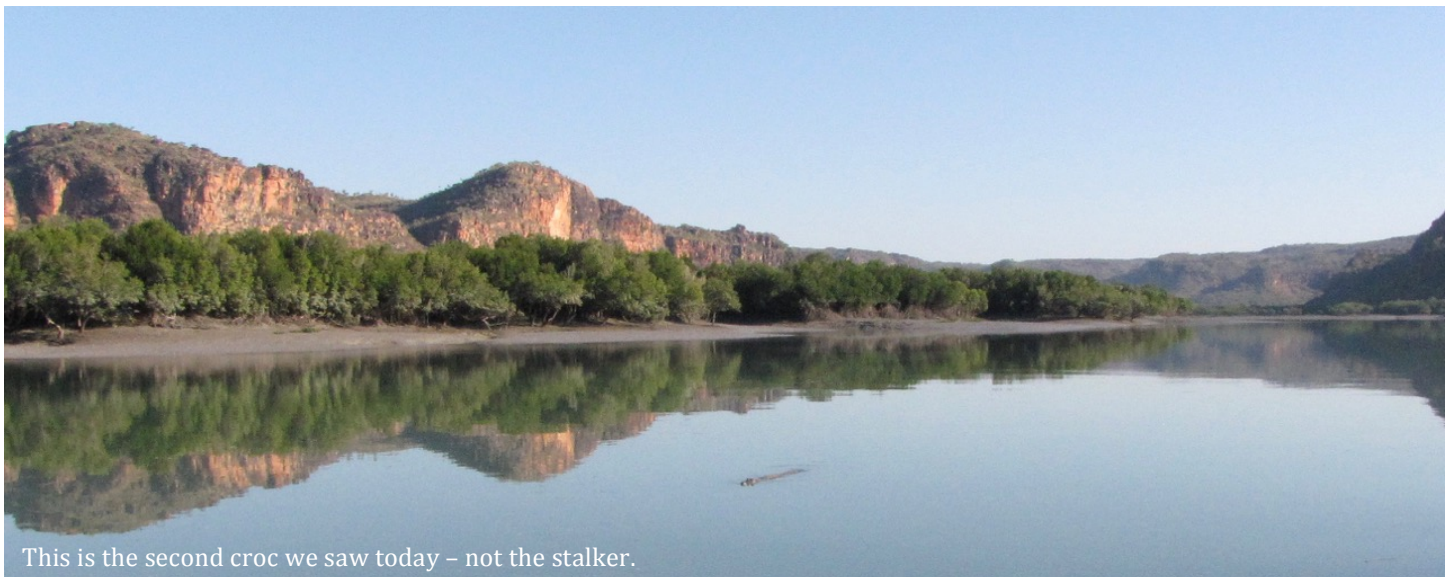
29th July 2017. There were no particular plans for today except to explore Porosus Creek. Technically we left on a rising tide but we were early and it even got shallow upstream in the tinnie. The scenery was enjoyable and the birdlife prolific, although it was hidden in the mangroves and we saw very little of it. A further explore on a higher tide didn't eventuate. Birdlife: Brahminy kite, (adult and junior) intermediate egret, white faced heron, sacred kingfisher, mangrove robin, striated heron, and common sandpiper. Hundreds of tiny mudskippers were seen as well as a few larger ones. Croc Count 5.





The Stalker.

Stalked 30th July 2017. Porosus Creek. There is something quite creepy about being stalked by a prehistoric creature. Granted, and thankfully, this wasn't the biggest croc we have seen but it is the biggest one we've seen here. I wasn't sure if it was the smell of cat litter that was attracting it or the extra saline in the water making process. It circled us for 2 hours!! Despite all intentions we didn't go out in the tinnie today, there was no enthusiasm for fishing and we didn't even get around to picking up some fresh food that we'd been offered from another boat. It was a hot and lazy day, the only 'excitement' was our persistent 2.5 meter reptilian friend. A Great billed heron was working the mangrove edge of the creek. Croc count 3.



This is the second croc we saw today – not the stalker.



Mermaid Tree

Porosus Creek to Careening Bay

31st July 2017. I am sad to say that we motored all day today. There was no wind, or nothing worth talking about, and the first wisps of breeze over three knots appeared about one nautical mile from our destination. We'd had the anchor up at 0630 and thankfully there was no sign of yesterday's reptilian visitor. As the seas were flat, Andrew, Cilla and Tiger spent most of the trip lounging in the front cockpit. Me, on the other hand couldn't slack off too much, I was in charge of Rule Number 1 - *Don't Hit Anything!*

Careening Bay (on the access permit for Wanambal Gaambera Aboriginal Corporation grounds) is actually in the Prince Regent Nature Reserve, a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve. The 625,000 hectares and the habitats it encompass are home to 36 mammal species, 136 bird species, 26 land snails, 13 frog and 54 reptile species..

In 1820, Captain Philip Parker King careened his boat 'Mermaid' here in order to effect repairs. The captain was on one of his exploration trips along the coast and the Secretary General of England had given him instructions to 'take care to leave some evidence which cannot be mistaken for your having landed'. *

Today, around 200 years later the inscription on this aging tree still stands. The tree is still alive and I noticed seed pods on the extent of a couple of its branches. Not so well highlighted is a much smaller boab, just at the back of the beach where HMAS C???? (inscription not clear) inscribed a tree in 1999 and Cerac put in their own two cents in 2012.



When we landed the incoming tide didn't look so bad but nearer high tide it became quite strong (I couldn't hold the tinnie) and a surf developed - we had water splashing over the gunwales and it was a struggle to get back in. Sundowners was on Sengo with the ketch (Pearl lugger) **Winston**.



*Note: Information above from interps boards at base of the Mermaid Tree.