

# Aboard Sengo

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October 2017

## Hitchhiker

The Young Man and  
the Sea

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## The Windy City

A quick stop in the  
Friendliest Town

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## Bigger than some...

The biggest travel-lift  
so far ... but we were  
still the smallest boat  
on our side of the yard!

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Preening time

## Cold, Wet and Windy!

Half of October was spent hiding from rough weather. And most of the rest of it was spent traveling south. The intervening stop in Geraldton was pleasant ...but our arrival into Freemantle had a tragic start.

## A month of windy weather...

The first two thirds of October was spent traveling down what is, apparently, the windiest coast in Australia, but for a sailing vessel we did an awful lot of motoring. The overriding reason for this was, ironically, wind... there was either not enough of it, or it was in the wrong direction to be useful, or there was going to be that much of it we needed the extra boost of the motors to get us to shelter before the strong winds came in. Sometimes, predicted good winds (for us 10-15 knots) had come in early, sometimes they just didn't turn up at all, and when the forecast changed dramatically when we were relying on two or three days of predicted calm to useful weather and the reality gave us one day, our plans had to be flexible enough to be prepared to burn a little fuel. Being sailors we didn't really like this, but neither did we like the prospect of finding ourselves unprotected in strong, damaging and stressful winds.

### Shark Bay

Shark Bay, the large double bayed expanse of water on the western coast of WA was named by William Dampier because of the plethora of sharks that were seen. We saw three. Of cormorants on the other hand – we saw thousands. Of the bay itself ... we didn't really see it at all. Our late entry on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October meant we missed its well-known northern town of Canarvon in order to rush to protection on the northern side of a middle arm, across 60 nm of water. Here we stayed until we could move again, traveling first 40 nm south and then back across a 20 nm expanse of water to finally get to some civilization out of a need for fuel and water... Denham is a useful little town but probably not a highlight of the area. Of the famous tourist sites of Monkey Mia, the Hamelin Pool stromatolites, and Inscription Bay where Dirk Hartog left his pewter plate in 1616, we saw nothing. The closest we got to admiring any length of coastline was sailing down the South Passage in order to anchor to wait until an opportunity presented itself to leave. The only land based activities were a one-hour walk on Dirk Hartog Island and three (wet) trips into shore via tinnie to pick up fuel and food in Denham. We didn't even get to the Visitors' Centre!

## The Geraldton Coast

We traveled the coast from Shark Bay to the Perth area in two large jumps....exploring the smaller communities along the coast will have to wait until next time. We left Shark Bay with a three-day window, and had a wonderful rum line – until the wind changed. We tried to be clever, setting the autopilot to 45 degrees off the wind (which usually gives us a very efficient sail) but when the wind changed course to the south this tactic didn't work efficiently at all. At 0600 we were still a long way out of Geraldton and I wasn't going to anchor in the dark... engines were turned on full and the anchor was down just after sunset. Had the trip been slower, arriving in the light the next day was not an issue – it was the strong wind warning predicted for the day after that, that had to be managed.

Leaving Geraldton a few days later presented us with similar predicted conditions; a three-day window before stronger winds were due to come in from the south. The forecast however changed after we left, the winds were too light to just sail for the first part of the trip, the bom.gov.au predicted wind changes and direction didn't eventuate and again realising the strong winds were now due 24 hours earlier than expected, the engines went on for a Rottnest Island stop – 20 nautical miles north of our original Cockburn Sound destination.

We met some great boats this month but as per last month there is one particular boat that deserves an extra mention. *Tiga* provided friendship and companionship when we met him in Geraldton but more importantly provided us with some very much needed emotional support when we arrived in Fremantle toward the end of the month. Thank you.



### Another overnighter!

1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2017. Maud's Landing to Herald Bight. We awoke early to discover three of the four power boats that had been in the anchorage with us overnight had left, and we wondered (actually deep down we knew) whether the wind had already changed and we'd missed the 'boat,' reasoning we were now behind the wind schedule by about 6 hours! The one remaining power-boat left after our departure and overtook us within a couple of hours – he was only doing the measly speed of 23.5 knots! Because we had missed the early wind (and completely missed the easterlies) we had the motor on for the first two hours but when we turned it off we were traveling at a respectable 6.5 knots.

We were on time for our original travel schedule when we were contacted by *Blessing* as to our location on our way down the coast (still around 40 nautical miles north of Cape Cuvier) – the average of 5 nautical miles had been achieved and if all went to plan we should be sailing into Canarvon around 0800 the next morning. The plan then was for a quick visit to town for food and fuel and then a concerted effort to get to the other side of the northern section of Shark Bay (the preference was Monkey Mia) to shelter from the impending wind. Well, that didn't quite happen. Due to the changing wind direction and strength we took hours to get around Cape

Cuvier, so subsequently, we were hours behind. We didn't have time to go shopping at Canarvon – we needed to find shelter. Monkey Mia was just that bit too far away but the bay to the north was doable – at a push. At 0900 we had full motors on and full sails in order to arrive by dark. The strong winds were due to pick up around 1600 and they were going to be close to on the nose. Poor Sengo - we really pushed the boat. The sails came down when the apparent wind hit 20 knots just about exactly when they had been predicted, and whilst the sun was down when we threw out the anchor (which thankfully took first go as the anchorage is dotted with weed) we managed to get settled before it got dark proper. We had only seen a couple of dolphins along the way but entertainment for the thirty-six hour trip had been provided by the constant company of whales.

3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> October 2017. Herald Bight. Herald Bight turned out to be a comfortable anchorage and whilst it is shallow and we were a fair way from shore resulting in a bit of fetch from the beach to our boat (and surprisingly large rolly waves passing us) Sengo was essentially level and there was none of the rocking we'd had at Maud's Landing. There were small patches of really calm weather over our stay here but that's all they were, small patches, and on either side there were the predicted strong winds that we were sheltering from. Despite the predictions of 25-30 knots we only saw a maximum of 24 on our gauges but we may not have seen the strongest winds (always gone by the time the instruments are up and running to check) and we have always been suspicious that our gauges are reading low anyway. Because of these winds however there was no chance to go ashore...



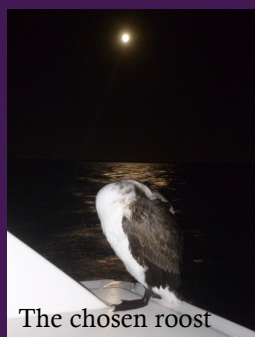


### Hitchhiker!

6<sup>th</sup> October 2017. Herald Bight to Herald Bay. This day's intention was to get to Mead Is. The intention was also to leave around 0500. Neither of these happened. The winds finally looked favorable (and light enough) for us to get ourselves around Peron Point and further south toward the exit of Shark Bay. Looking at anchoring options we decided on Mead Is for the extra south-east protection it would afford and the long 40 nm trip meant we aimed to start around 0500 in order to arrive before stronger winds were predicted in the evening. The winds looked like they would assist us, the 15-20 south-easterly that would push us from behind when we left would become a nice beam reach when we turned the corner, and then, according to predictions they would lighten off somewhat and afford us a pleasant sail in 10-15 knots (with a short period of 5-10 knots) all the way down to the anchorage. We were however delayed in our departure – and it wasn't because we weren't ready!

The alarm had been set for 0400 and we dutifully, if not, reluctantly, pulled ourselves out of bed, feeding the cats who thought all was normal (it is normal – for them) and got the kettle on for a morning cuppa. The back cockpit had its final clean up, Andrew got on top of the cabin to unzip the sail bag, and I was stomping around outside making sure all my washing was in and the back port lifeline to the steps was closed. In all this noise, however, a clearly tired, perhaps exhausted, (perhaps blaze) little visitor balanced on 'his' left leg on the edge of the bottom starboard step, head deeply entrenched under wing. 'We've got a visitor' Andrew said 'what do you want to do?' Looking like the silhouette of a funeral urn, holding his own on his flexible peg I didn't want to disturb him (we assumed it was a him). We had no idea when he arrived but based on our calculations I thought we could wait a little longer; assuming he would wake himself up with the dawn (sunrise was around an hour away) and be off. We went back inside to wait. Half an hour later there was no change. There was still no acknowledgement from our friend of our existence and I worried about what to do. Despite not wanting to 'disturb the wildlife' I knew however we had to take this day to get further south or, according to predictions, we would not get another chance for some time. The decision was made to leave. The engines were turned on. And finally our visitor decided he would come in from the land of nod, raised his neck, took one look at us and re-tucked himself back away under the shelter of his wings. He was still on one foot. Somehow he managed to stay put during all the machinations of lifting the anchor and even a bit more pressure on the engines to get us going failed to disturb him. Unfortunately the lighter winds had come in slightly earlier than expected but we had enough wind to sail away (slowly). Still snoozing at dawn the cormorant didn't really rouse himself until it was absolutely light and then he only moved closer in step and sat down for a complete rest. Some time during his maneuvering we discovered he had an injured foot and I was worried he was going to fall off at any moment. But he had clearly had it for a long time; at one point balancing on his good foot and tail to use the injured limb to comb his head. The wind had got lighter still and whilst Andrew didn't want to put the engines on in order to save fuel, we drifted with no wind until it was obvious we were actually heading backwards. It was this second engine spurt that finally moved our hitchhiker on. After soiling the main big step where he was originally having his biggest rest, he very awkwardly hopped up the next two steps, soiling another on the way, and finally came upon the landing of the engine hatch. He did struggle getting on this, the vibration and rocking of the boat meant he couldn't put his bung leg down easily and it slipped off several times before he got appropriate traction. Fully awake I think he decided he'd had enough. Hobbling to the side he used a foot onto the sloping gunwale to push himself into the air and glide away from the boat toward a group of his brethren at a feeding frenzy off to our starboard side. We assumed he was an old bird but a closer look at his plumage may indicate an older juvenile. Either way he was clearly a survivor and we wished him well. He'd been with us for 17 nautical miles – but because we'd gone around the point, as the 'cormorant' flies his journey had only been 9 nautical miles. I wonder if he's done this before.





The chosen roost



There you are!



Pre dawn



Still snoozing

Looking like a funeral urn in darkness Andrew discovered our visitor just before we were going to lift anchor. We don't know when he/she arrived but all of our stomping around on the deck hadn't woken this cormorant. We gave him an extra half hour expecting him to wake up and leave just before sunrise. This didn't happen and when we put the motors on to leave there was barely a stir. (even the flashing camera didn't disturb him). Eventually he pulled his head out and tried to balance on the edge with one good leg and one bad one. Thinking he was terminally injured I fretted over what I should be doing. He stayed with us for around 17 nautical miles and only left after we put the engines on for a second time.



A proper rest



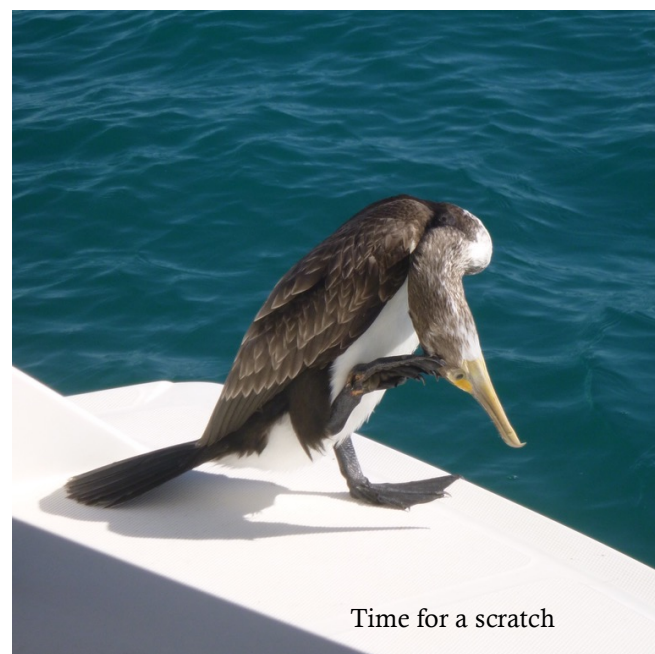
Working on the balance

Our hitchhiker (fondly) reminded me of the Christopher Isherwood poem:

The common cormorant (or shag)  
Lays eggs inside a paper bag,  
The reason you will see, no doubt?  
It's to keep the lightning out.

But what these unobservant birds  
Have failed to notice, is that herds  
Of wandering bears might come with buns  
And steal the bags to hold the crumbs.

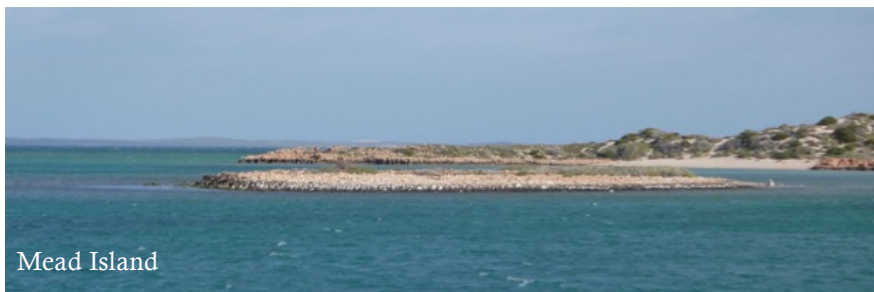
(There are a couple of versions of this poem).



Time for a scratch

7<sup>th</sup> October 2017. Herald Bay. Despite the offer to join *Blessing* (and others) in Tetrodon Loop to get a bit more out of the wind we opted to stay put as our plan was to head across to Denham on the morrow. Having not had the time to pull into Canarvan we were down to half tanks of diesel and wanted to top up before attempting to get to Geraldton just in case we got caught and had to motor all the way. We were also running out of food. So, despite the swell, which did end up coming from the south east, we sat it out for an easy departure

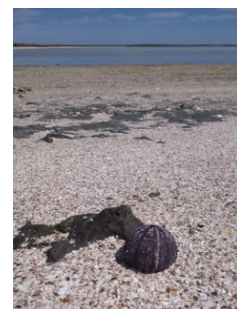
8<sup>th</sup> October 2017. Herald Bay to Mead Island. Early morning winds were predicted to be 15-20 knots but were supposed to calm down mid morning. The wind was certainly up when we prepared to leave and the swell had me thinking I was in a monohull! Because the wind was strong I suggested we use the genoa only – against Andrew's better judgment – and that's the way we sailed. Unfortunately using only the genoa means you can't point as high into the wind than if you had both sails up and there was no way we were going to make Denham in any time suitable to do what we needed to do, and return to a safe anchorage in the afternoon. In the end we gave up and headed for Mead Island instead, coming into the shallow water and anchoring north east of the moorings outside the accommodation. For the distance it had been a long sail and we were exhausted.



Mead Island

## Land!

9<sup>th</sup> October 2017. Mead Island. The wind, bless it, dropped a bit and we went ashore to stretch our legs. The area adjacent Mead Island is a private tourist accommodation run by the grandson of the man who bought the island in 1968. As Dirk Hartog Island is listed as a National Park (with a patch annexed for the accommodation on the Department of Parks and Wildlife map) and the blurb on the accommodation website doesn't say that it was handed back over, I am not sure of the legal ownership status of the land. None the less we landed the tinnie well to the right of the accommodation and strolled north. It was only an hour's walk but it was the first time we had touched land in two weeks! The sun was out, the wind was light enough that you could feel the sun on your skin, and the water looked inviting for a swim but it was very cold and three sharks in the shallows put a stop to that idea. There was a fair bit of birdlife in dune vegetation but it was hidden. The birds we did see include: pied oystercatchers, a Caspian tern, a pair of crow/raven (hard to tell), red capped dotterels, singing honeyeaters, and a silver gull. We were back on board for lunch.

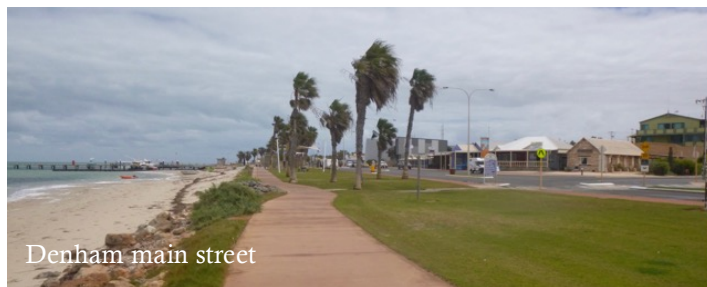
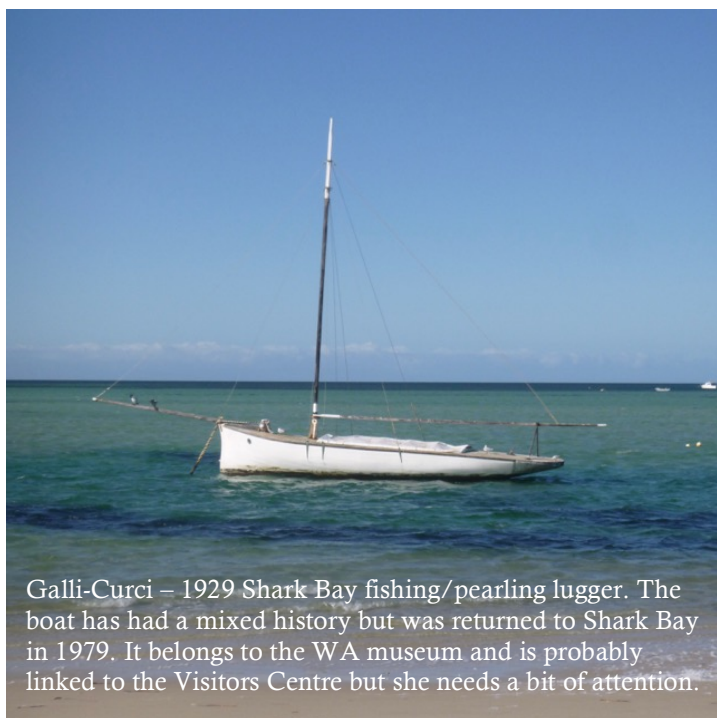


Dirk Hartog Island



Dirk Hartog Island





Express at the bottom end of town near the fuel outlet. Filling the trolleys with fresh food and supplies we headed back to Sengo to get even more drenched. The wind had picked up and so had the waves. Both of us were wet, cold and grumpy - there would be no more trips to shore today.

11<sup>th</sup> October 2017. Denham to Shelter Bay. Agreeing that we'd rather brave anchoring in 15-20 knots than sailing in it (even on the lee shore) we had prepared ourselves for a windy night that, apart from a couple of gusts, never really eventuated. As predicted the wind had swung to the south-east by the morning and because of the shape of the land there was some shelter from the wind; the fetch much less than had it been across the bay. We got up early. We needed to head back out for another fuel run before sailing toward the bottom of the South Passage as early as possible – at 1700 the wind was predicted to reach 20-25 knots. Fuel run accomplished, Sengo's anchor was up at 0930 and we sailed out of Denham with an average SOG of around 8 knots before we got to the shallow channels in the middle of the bay. The wind angle heading into the South Passage required a bit of tacking which was fine until the stronger winds came in - around three hours early! As we were only a couple of nautical miles from our anchorage we dropped the sails and motored in.

12<sup>th</sup> October 2017. Strong Wind Warning! There's not much you can do in a strong wind warning except sit it out. We read a bit, cleaned a bit, replaced the first reef line (again – as a sheath had disintegrated in the UV and cut the rope) and replaced the disintegrated sheath. The wind was strong and it was icy. Overnight we had recorded 24 knots – *Blessing* had recorded 30 – our instruments are definitely reading low!

10<sup>th</sup> October 2017. Mead Is to Denham. This morning's forecast was due to start with 15-20 knots and then reduce to 10-15 knots before hitting back to 15-20 knots south-west, south and then south-east overnight. We thought if we could ride out the higher winds at Denham (which would mean a lee shore) we'd have a lovely broad reach back across the bay toward South Passage the following morning. Our morning started in the light and the anchor was up and we were sailing around 0630. It was a lovely sail across and we were at the right angle to sail through the two shallow channels in the middle of the bay. Arriving in Denham around 1030 we anchored off and loaded our jerry cans into the tinnie to get fuel. Our initial heading to shore took us over very shallow water (I had to get out and walk the tinnie for a bit) so the route was adjusted on the way back to travel along the



beach to the jetty and then out toward Sengo along the dredged channel. This worked better in terms of depth but we got absolutely soaked. We decanted the jerry's ready for a second run but headed toward town for a food shop first. Trying the 'supermarket' at the top end of town we discovered the range not as great and the prices a little higher than at the IGA



# Geraldton



Geraldton was declared a town in 1850 (the municipality in 1871) and has always had a harbor with visiting ships and departing goods; the first lighthouse at Bluff Point started operations in 1876. Geraldton's port exports grains (wheat, lupins and canola), iron ore (the product is under cover for transport and storage so the city is not covered in persistent red dust like other iron ore export ports), minerals and precious metals (talc, gold, zircon, rutile and something called ilmerite). The town is also base to a large fishing fleet. Geraldton has around 40,000 people, and supports the outlying local communities with School of the Air. The old railway yards along the foreshore have been converted into parkland and there is a market on Sundays at the old station. The city is only 415 kilometers from Perth by road.

13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> October 2017. Shelter Bay to Geraldton. [www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au)'s forecast suggested we would be okay sailing from 1100. *Predict Wind* suggested we'd be okay sailing from 1000. We picked the anchor up at 0900 but even then it took us around an hour to get out of the South Passage past Steep Point. Our sum log wasn't working so that was Andrew's first job, and removing the water in the bilge associated with cleaning the reader. The sails were put up whilst in the passage (a reef in a main) but it took another good hour sailing north-west before we could tack for the rum line to Geraldton.

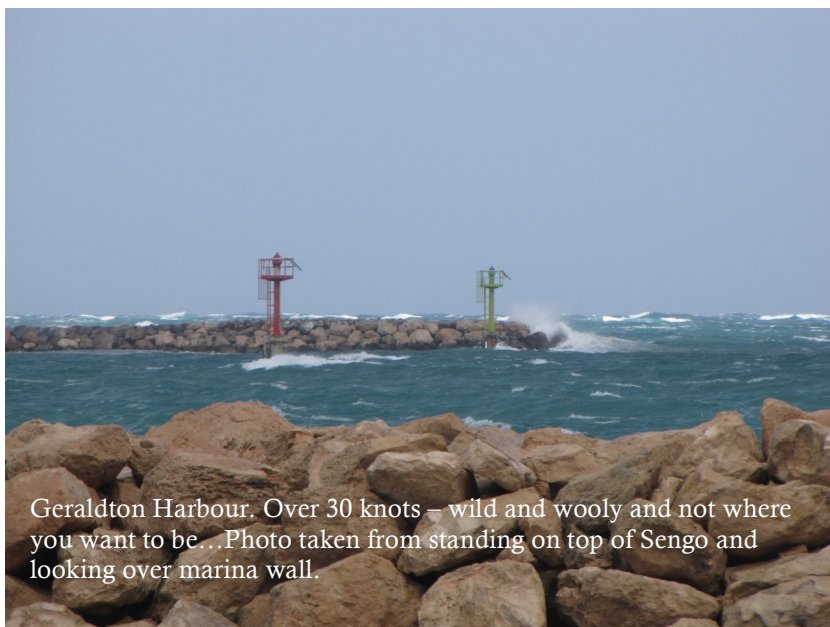
*Blessing*, sailing with us, kept mainly on a simple heading but we tried to be clever and it didn't quite work. In the end we had 17 hours pure sailing but 12 hours of motoring under sail in order to get into Geraldton before dark – again the anchor was down after sunset - all set well in a quiet bay outside the yacht club

15<sup>th</sup> October 2017. The morning started with breakfast at Fleur Café. Andrew had his usual indulgence – the biggest breakfast he could find – but I opted for gluten free pancakes with berries, bananas and yoghurt. My cup of tea was infused with chocolate and mint – it sounded good, it smelt great, but the taste.... After breakfast we took a quick look at the Batavia Marina to see if there was room (the two end berths seemed free), took a walk through the Sunday markets (where I resisted the temptation of fig and ginger jam), had a chat to the yacht club (where we were assured where we were anchored had good holding and there was no room on their marina berths for us) and enjoyed a natter with the couple in the Info Centre where some of the history of Geraldton was imparted before moving Sengo onto the end of one of the free Batavia Mariana Arms to settle it in for the big blow. The after hours number for the Department of Transport (DoT) wasn't working so we thought we would just deal with the consequences the next morning. As it was a DoT staff member came checking the docks so whilst final details needed to be sorted out, at least we were officially registered. Sengo got a quick washdown and we spent the afternoon relaxing before being taken to dinner by *Blessing*.



The old railway station – a market is held each Sunday

16<sup>th</sup> October 2017. The locals warned of the surge in the marina and being on the end berth we were in a perfect position to cop some of it. Sengo had survived overnight although a couple of her fenders had crept down and the only thing separating the boat from the dock was the plastic end where the rope attached. With 30 plus knot winds and our large freeboard we were going to struggle to push her out far enough to pull them up (in Port Stephens we had 6 people Pushing Segno's 20 tonnes against 40 knots of wind to get fenders in). Fortunately we had been spotted by Adam from an adjacent boat ... and with his help we managed to pull the larger teardrop fenders up a bit and slide a couple of the old longer fenders in for backup (even a slightly flat one - I was happy to put anything down as a buffer). The morning was cold, it was windy. It was bleak!



Geraldton Harbour. Over 30 knots – wild and wooly and not where you want to be...Photo taken from standing on top of Sengo and looking over marina wall.

Having nothing better to do on a wild windy day we thought we would visit the Geraldton Museum – about 100 meters away from Sengo if we swam – about 200 if we walked. The guided tour of the Shipwreck Gallery is scheduled at 1130. At 1030 we thought we would put out some frozen meat to thaw for dinner. We had a choice.....and we didn't have to thaw it! The fridge had stopped working – all our previously frozen meat was fully thawed and subsequently, we didn't get to the Museum...we spent the rest of the day cooking!

We were cold – but the fridge wasn't!! We were very fortunate that we found a local who could deal with our fridge – the only catch was – the entire unit had to be taken to his factory to be assessed. Fortunately the contractor had most parts needed for a fix and we got the fridge back two days later....



The 34-meter Moore Point lighthouse was built by Chance Brothers in England and shipped to Australia in pre fabricated sections. It is the only lighthouse in Western Australia built of steel and to ensure its integrity it gets painted on a regular basis. First lit in 1878 it was tended to by a lighthouse keeper and two assistant keepers. It was automated in 1985.

The MV Stanford ran aground in 1936 on African Reef 20 kilometers from Geraldton. The MV Koolinda retrieved 17 people from Stamford's life boat at dawn the next day after responding to an SOS the previous evening. A little later they were back to retrieve the rest of the 16 crew, the ships cat and her three kittens! Awww.



Propeller of MV Stanford – outside Geraldton Museum





Dome of Souls

## Memorial to HMAS Sydney

Thanks to a dedicated band of volunteers you can get a half hour (free) guided tour of the memorial to the HMAS Sydney (The 2<sup>nd</sup> Ship to be given that name) which is located prominently on a hill overlooking downtown Geraldton and its harbour. The concept of the memorial was first documented in 1999 and initial Construction completed in 2001, seven years before the watery grave of the HMAS Sydney was eventually located (in 2008, 57 years after she was sunk). The prominent seagull in the Pool of Remembrance points to the coordinates of Sydney's resting place whilst the Waiting Woman's position was adjusted ever so slightly after the ship was found.

The metal obelisk base to the north of the Dome of Souls is based on the exact proportions of the bow of the ship and the Dome of Souls consists of 645 seagulls, representing the lives lost on the ship in its fateful encounter with the German raider, Kormoran. This is not a war memorial, but a memorial to the ship and its crew, whose association with Geraldton included four visits to the port.



The Waiting Woman



### The Leaning Tree

To make sure you know it's a windy place, the local tourist guru's have made an example of a wind swept tree – they've even built a car park with an interps board! The view is west so by the time we got there we were looking into the setting sun. Across the road are more examples in a sheep paddock but I guess any examination of stunted trees bent to the prevailing winds would prove the point.





The Lighthouse Keepers house at Bluff Point (1876 and Heritage listed) (around 2 'miles' from town) has been occupied by the local historical society since 1971 (they lease the land off the council for a peppercorn rent) and acts as a small museum for the history of the building, the Port's early life and early prominent pioneers of the town and district. There are lots of general looking artefacts here, and I assume they are all be associated with locals or maritime history– although you will have to ask the staff to confirm this. We didn't spend all that much time here; it is a very small building. There is a library for historical research and if you get the right volunteer you can learn a lot about Geraldton's maritime history and this little cottage. The building itself formed part of the leads through the 'reef' and the lighthouse keeper would keep the light burning in the very small room (around 6x4 feet) upstairs from his bedroom (the steps are original and magnificently worn) as well as the actual lighthouse further seaward down the hill. Unfortunately the other lighthouse is no longer there – although made of stone, the internals were largely timber and had to be demolished in the 1950's when vandals tried to burn it down. Entry is \$3.



Greenough is a small community around ten kilometers south of Geraldton, with a surf beach caravan park and lots of wind! The Greenough River Nature Walk Trail is divided into seven sections over 16.8 km and will take about 4 hours one way if you traverse all of them. We walked part of the first section – it was too cold and windy to enjoy any more.



Greenough River





Geraldton Museum

Geraldton's Museum (an annex of the Museum of Western Australia) is small, lies on the marina waterfront, and consists of one main gallery with three galleries leading off from its sides. The main gallery consists of local and regional history, the gallery to the north is dedicated to the famous shipwrecks along this coast, and the two other galleries consist of an environmental exhibition (which believe it or not we didn't go into) and a dedication to the HMAS Sydney, the centre piece of which is a twelve minute silent film of underwater footage of the Sydney herself.

It was an extremely hot day when we (finally) visited the museum. We'd spent the morning sorting out our phone service (at the Telstra shop) and in our exhaustion didn't really give this little building the attention it deserved. Having written that however, the main gallery gives a great overview of the area's history and the shipwreck gallery is full of artifacts and information, and some unbelievable relics (a glass that is not broken), from the tragedies of the sea. The portico pictured was due for delivery for one of the entrances of the Dutch quarter of Batavia (Jakarta).

In the main area I read that Geraldton's first 'Sunshine Festival' was held in 1959. To reflect the endeavours of the community and surrounding districts the name of the festival went through a series of suggested name changes and in the process the mayor deemed that the festival was more than a local community affair encouraging attendees from further afield to come to Geraldton: the Friendliest Town in the West. Indeed everyone, without exception, whom I passed in the street in the few days we were there, said 'Hello'. That's unheard of anywhere else.

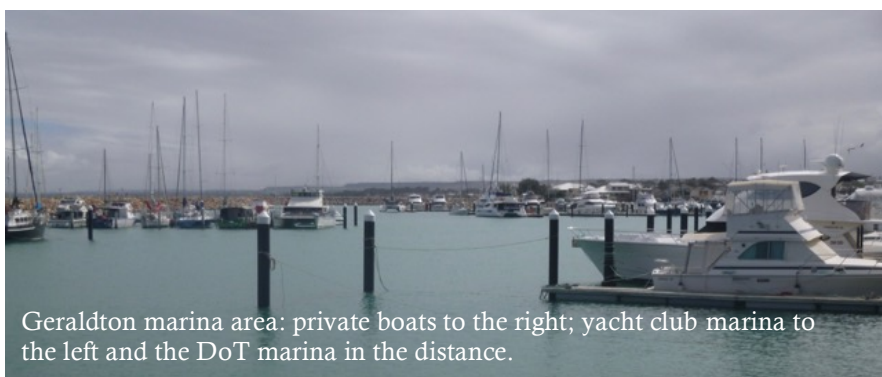


Geraldton Museum

Being part of the Museum of WA the interps is professionally done and looks terrific. Technically entry is free but they do ask for a donation of \$5.



Shipwreck Gallery



Geraldton marina area: private boats to the right; yacht club marina to the left and the DoT marina in the distance.

## A painful start to a tragic finish – broken toes to broken hearts

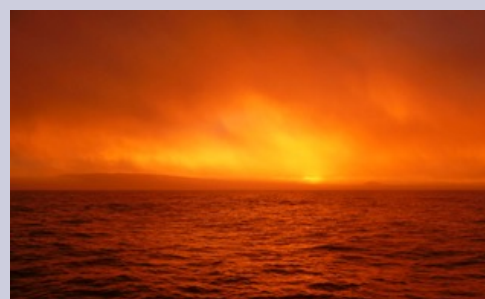
Geraldton to Fremantle

22<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2017

Of the boats at the Batavia Coast Marina we knew were heading south, we were the last to leave. Two race boats and a cruiser had left before I got up, two more race boats left at 0610 and the last cruiser left around 0630. That left us on our own on the end of the t-head with several ropes and no assistance. Fortunately the wind was calm enough to get off easily; in fact the forecast was for calm weather for three days. Unfortunately it changed.

Clearly the previous few strong wind days had contributed to the swell and whilst we got a bit of the surge through the breakwater inside the marina we were stunned at the voracity of the swell just outside it. A side swell caught me off guard and I slipped, my right foot heading half over the edge of one of the helm steps and was stopped by the metal pole. Unfortunately my right big toe went to the left of the pole, and the rest of the toes went to the right. Normally there isn't that big a gap between the toes and despite my poor feet having been in the wars for the past few months, the previous incidents were nothing like this - I heard the 'crack'. Of course on a boat you've got no time to feel sorry for yourself and you just get on with it despite the pain.

The trip overall was a pleasant one, the seas were not too rough, but the wind was a smidge light, and except for a four-hour storm that had us pure sailing near ten knots, we were motoring just to keep to an average speed in order to anchor at the other end in the light. Technically with the original estimated length of light winds this slow trip wouldn't have mattered but having internet access a large way down the coast we could keep an eye on bom.gov.au and soon discovered that our three day weather window had become two.

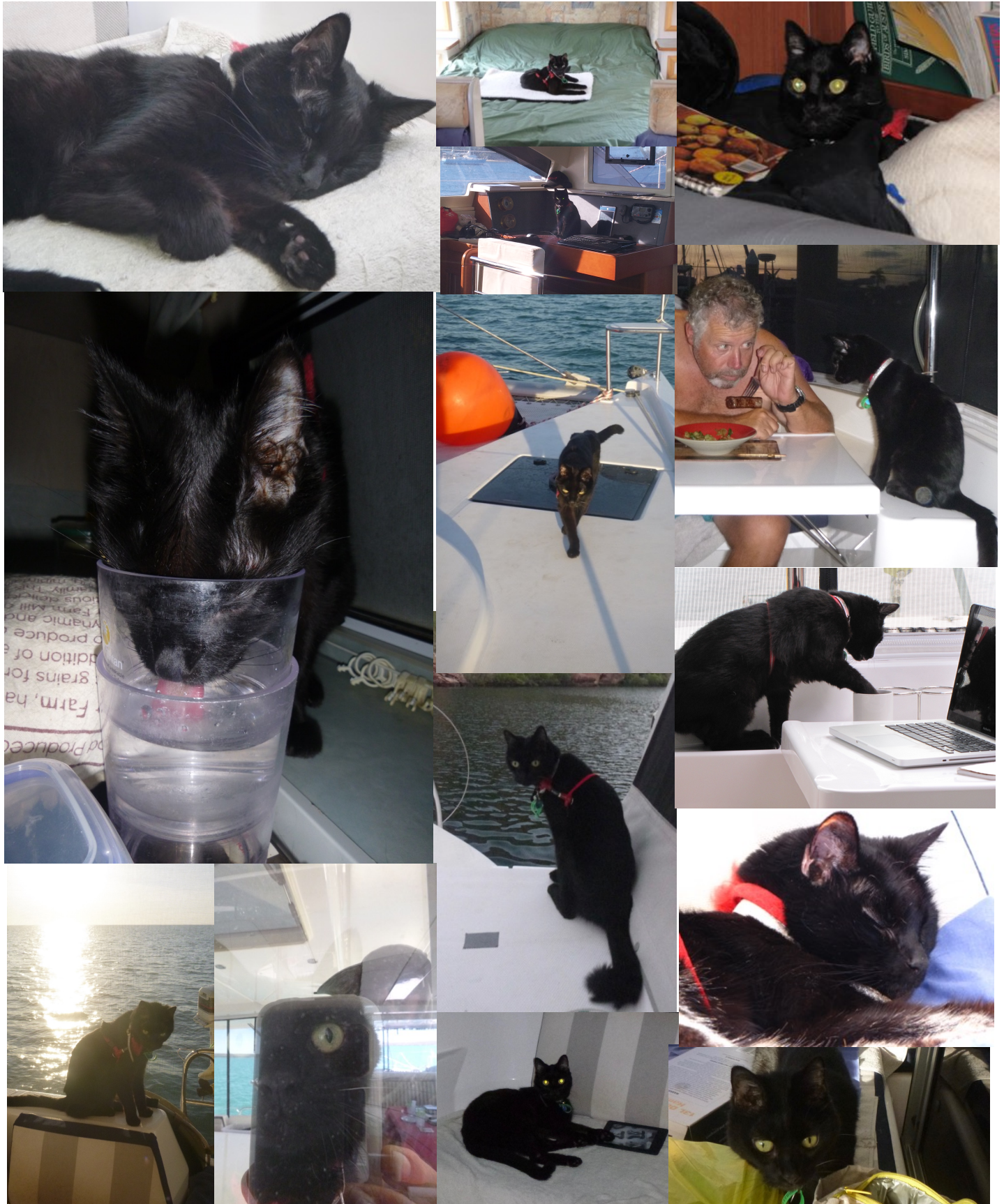


The whales seemed to have abandoned us for this trip and our only entertainment was provided by the largest pod of dolphins we'd seen for some time. They stayed with us for quite a while. The sunset on day one was brilliant orange. The sunset on day two was hardly noticed. We had just put down the anchor and we were exhausted.

The aim had to been to do a bit of relaxing sight seeing and to explore Garden and Rottnest Islands before heading across to the mainland - but it wasn't to be. Cilla's health had catastrophically deteriorated during the night and we rushed into Fremantle the following morning with our darling girl. Tragically she is now in the big catnip garden in the ether and hopefully looking over us. It was horrendous and our hearts are broken. It is not quite the arrival into Fremantle we were expecting.



**In memory of Cilla: Our wonderful girl ... ....She will not be forgotten!  
(photos from the past year)**





# Fremantle

26<sup>th</sup> October 2017. The hardest task of today was working how to get off the boat! Today's main job was to swap some cat food over, now not needing all the food I'd purchased for Cilla, the idea was to swap those boxes for more food for Tiger. To do this we needed to drop into the distribution centre in Balcutta, around 20 kilometres north of Perth, and indeed the main reason we had hired the car. Because the morning was predicted to be miserable (see photo) there was no point moving until after the rain had come through (we needed to use a trolley to transport the boxes) and we finally decided to make a move at around 0930. Except it wasn't that easy. Being tied up to a traditional (non-floating) jetty means that there needs to be slack in the lines to allow for the movement of the tide. Combine this with a (very) strong breeze pushing us off the jetty and you find that even Andrew, with his long legs, doesn't have enough room to step from boat to fixed concrete. For the past few days we have been able, because of the reduced wind strength, to pull the boat closer to the jetty with the aid of a rope. Today that was not to be, the ropes too small, and the wind too

strong for a mere human to make any difference. A different tactic was required. We tried the engines – the idea being that if we drove forward we would come closer to the jetty; the tactic we usually use for docking on a floating jetty.... But this didn't work – predominantly because we are a yacht and our engines weren't powerful enough to counteract the wind – the front of Sengo did pivot a bit toward the jetty but there was no useful movement at the back, where we needed it to be. In the end it was a bit of lateral thinking that solved our issue. One of the ropes tied to the jetty was adjacent our outer helm station entrance and fortunately had a fair bit of a tail on the dock. Using an extended boat hook, we retrieved the free end, fed it over the pulley usually used for our furling line and around an electric winch. This gave us just enough torque to get the boat close enough to the jetty so I could get off Sengo and work the ropes from 'shore'. Eventually we brought the boat closer to the jetty and whilst it was still a stretch we didn't need to pull the boat against the wind to get on and off her. We were

mentally exhausted by the end of this. It had taken us an hour.

Sengo nearer the dock and the rain temporarily absent we headed off to Balcutta, exchanged the cat food, filled a gas bottle in adjacent Innaoo (Perth has some interesting suburb names) and checked out a chandlery in Fremantle on the way home. ....

27<sup>th</sup> October 2017. It's amazing just where the time goes in a day-evening comes and you realise you haven't really achieved much at all. Our original plan was to head to the Maritime Museum today but we couldn't leave the boat before we'd been moved. An event at the club had the Harbour Master wanting to park the visiting ribs Mediterranean style along the collector jetty; the ropes set up to a chain in the middle of the fairway already for such an occasion. The issue was though that these were set up on the western end of



Just before the storm! The wind this morning was challenging!



later in the afternoon....

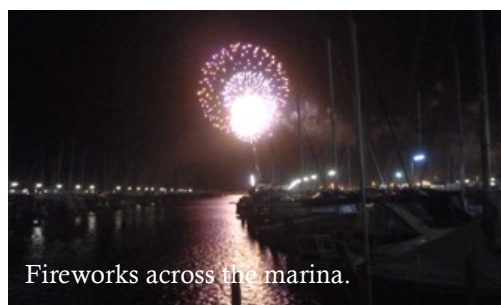
the jetty. We were on the western end of the jetty. So at around 0930 the staff came down to firstly hand move the cat behind us along the structure and then move us back as well, ironically to where we had first docked before being moved some days before. By the time we got out of the premises, visited one of the local chandleries, spoken to a local Ray Marine dealer and had a spot of lunch it was far too late to head to the museum and we headed home to a relaxing afternoon instead. Our social event of the day was an after dinner catch up with *Louna*.

28<sup>th</sup> October 2017. We had set aside today to meet up with sv *Arrabella*, a new Leopard 45 whose home port is just south of Fremantle. Being three years younger than Sengo it's interesting where the changes have been made in the internal design and layout (including some features I would just love to have), the fit out reflecting the modern style of Leopard's competitors more than when we got Sengo.

29<sup>th</sup> October 2017. We went sailing today. *Arrabella* was heading out to Garden Island for lunch and we hopped aboard for the ride. There was a fair bit of tacking on the way out due to the wind direction but the mooring field at the top of Garden Island was calm. We were the only boat there and despite an overcast morning the sun eventually did come out. The wind didn't change temperature much though and put the word 'fresh' into the description of the day. We were joined by a small pod of dolphins on the way back, and they had a ball, leading us back to the marina. Back on Sengo we got down to a bit of a tidy up, pickled the water maker and were entertained by an innovative fireworks display. (*Louna* had told us about the fireworks event – we'd just forgotten about it).



Sailing home from Garden Island



Fireworks across the marina.

We bought Tiger two fluffy cushions to cuddle up to, and whilst I think he has taken to them well, they are probably not the same as cuddling up to Cilla: although she rarely let him do that anyway! They are also white.....not that I think he's colourist.





## Up, Up and Away

30<sup>th</sup> October 2017. An early nervous start – well, I am always nervous when it comes to coming out of the water. Coming off a fixed dock with wooden uprights is not as easy as coming off a floating dock with metal cleats – you can't just set the lines up to slide through the gaps – the lines will catch on splinters on the wood. Fortunately the wind had died down and with the help of a passer by the extraction was painless. Of course we were way too early. We gave ourselves an hour to fiddle around and travel all of two nautical miles.

The travel lift is rated to 250 tonnes and is 10 meters wide, bigger than the 26' wide lifts that have lifted us out in the past. (This one takes the Rottneest Island ferries and *Ocean Dream* is currently on site). Previously there has been a foot's difference between our beam and the capacity of the lift – this day there was more space, so much so that we were still on board when she was lifted out of the water. I didn't know we were 'flying' until one of the dock workers told me we had clean air under our hulls. Once Sengo was on the ground however we were asked to come off so the hull could be high pressure water blasted. Poor Tiger – the noise was horrendous from the outside – I hate to think what it was like on the inside. – and whilst he had his new white fluffy cushions to cuddle up to he no longer has a companion to share the experience with. He was quite happy when it was all over though (After the water blasting Sengo was moved to her temporary dry dock) and, typically, just wanted to be fed.

31<sup>st</sup> October 2017. I actually decided to go to the doctor today. Whilst Andrew was busy sanding and organising contractors, I headed off to pick up a few items for the boat and detour via a GP. The toe that had 'cracked' on the way out of Geraldton was still sore, getting sorer and was still double the width of the corresponding digit on my left foot. Clearly last week had been occupied with grief; Cilla was priority, my injury was not, and I'd not been in the right frame of mind to organise any medical attention. Of course the GP sent me straight off to get an xray, ringing me later in the day to confirm what we'd already suspected – I had a broken toe. The break was just at the bottom of the digit so there was nothing they could really do except strap it. I am not sure if I am disappointed that I'm not getting a cast or a moon boot. But as it is my very first break I guess that it is something to celebrate – maybe? Apparently broken toes start to heal in around two weeks. I've already had it for one so the healing should start soon but I suspect it will be painful for quite some time.

