

Aboard Sengo

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February 2018

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Farewell to Freo: Finally!

After being boat bound for three weeks looking after our beloved feline... it was finally time to continue our Australian circumnavigation. Autumn is coming: days got shorter and nights got colder.

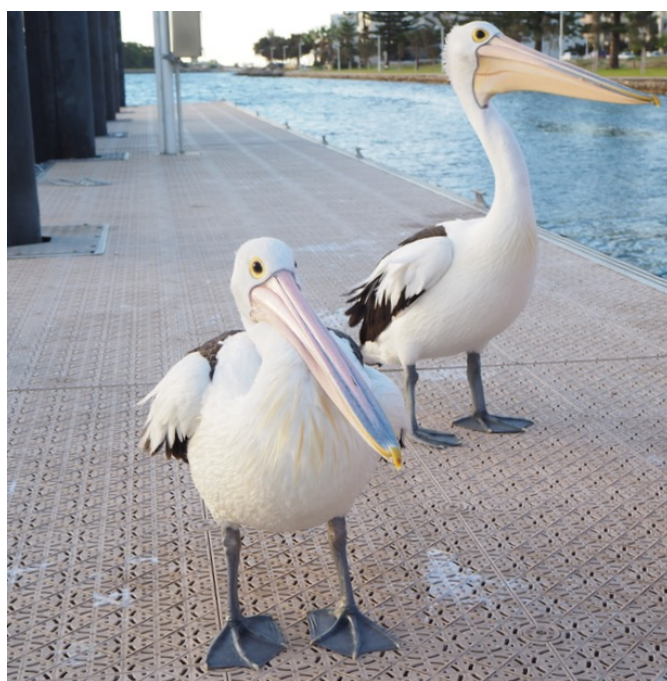


It must have been awful living in the Elizabethan age!

For the first three weeks of February we played nursemaid. And, we were still tied to the dock at the Fremantle Sailing Club! (We'd been around so long by this time we half expected to be asked to become members!) Finally though we were given the medical all clear (ish) to leave, and we made sure we made headway – there was no going down to Rockingham to plan the next jump this time, we just took it. After a quick stop in Mandurah to miss a strong wind warning we continued south. The Western Australian Coastline is enormous and to do it any justice we will have to come back. So with that in mind, we decided that the same principle would apply to the south coast as did the west; to get as far along it as possible as quickly as possible (weather depending). Before Christmas it was to get to the safety of Fremantle before the strong late spring and summer south-westerlies came in, now it was to get to Esperance to await the ideal window to get across the Great Australian Bight. A day's break was also had in Augusta before we finished the month by heading into Albany. We had spent 70 hours under sail in 5 travelling days (which doesn't seem long but there were two stints of over thirty hours).



Andrew got the opportunity to get off boat during our nurse maid stage, getting a sail on *Tiga* as part of the fleet to welcome Jon Sanders home from his tenth (and supposedly final) *World* circumnavigation.





Topped & tailed

(how did I end up sleeping on the floor?).

1st – 21st February 2018. At 0900 on the 1st February 2018 Tiger was not a happy cat! He was back in his cat cage at Sage Vets; a situation he had found himself in the previous afternoon, but on that occasion he came home within the hour. This would be a longer excursion and I can't imagine what was going through his mind as the cat cage, along with him, was taken in to the front room of the practice as Andrew and I walked out the back door. His unfamiliar location woes were not to end there. He was to be transported up the road a bit to the surgery, put under general anaesthetic and subjected to surgery no self-respecting cat wants to think about; essentially he had a cyst (confirmed later) growing just under his anus that required removal. Whilst he was 'out' we also got his teeth cleaned, and all importantly, his claws clipped as they were getting beyond a joke. Some

time late in the afternoon we brought home a drugged, stunned and no doubt, sore and humble 'little' pussy cat.

When the vet had asked me whether we had an Elizabethan collar I had had to take a moment to think – oh - a cone. I'd often seen dogs with the obstruction around their heads so they don't interrupt healing injuries, but I couldn't remember ever having seen one on a cat. No, we haven't got one. Yes. We will need one of those.

So poor little Tiger came home doped and clumsy; the obstacle around his face, despite being opaque, blocking all sense of the location of the walls (that he usually knows so well) and his relation to them. Our watch had begun: 24 hours a day for 10-14 days, or until the vet deemed the stitches ('dissolving' as the vet decided this the better option for all concerned) to be healed enough for Tiger to continue to do what cats do; spend inordinate amounts of hours cleaning themselves, flexing in all sorts of weird angles to get to the hardest to get at places.

Twenty-four hour supervision did not just mean being in the same room as him, however, it meant, when he was not sleeping at least, almost helicoptering over him so he didn't do himself an injury. It took him quite a while to work out how to eat from the bowl and for several days he hardly ate at all. Of course the fact that we tried a new diet in one go without easing it in and the fact he was still on pain killers probably didn't help. I was given extra pain killer tablets with the proviso to only give them to him if he looked like he was in pain (how can you tell?). The ruling was 'if in doubt'. I gave him one the day after his procedure but none after that. He seemed to be recovering and I know what excess pain killers did to my system when I had my gall stones removed. He was going to have enough trouble anyway – he didn't need any more incentives for constipation.

So, slowly he ate more and we reverted temporarily back to his original diet on advice of the vet, starting to substitute the new food in only when his appetite was back up to normal. Cats apparently, from what I've read on the interweb, are not that fond of a change in diet anyway so trying to get Tiger to change after such a traumatic event was always going to be a challenge. The issue we've got with Tiger is urinary tract disease. It was picked up years ago (fortunately, as I believe if you leave it too long you lose your cat) and he has been on prescription food ever since. The prescription food for urinary tract makes the urine slightly acidic (something we wouldn't recommend for humans but with a high protein diet we are probably not all pH neutral anyway) and the sensitive diet will be a more pH neutral mix. I managed to purchase some pH strips (more like a roll really) so I can periodically check Tiger's urine pH and adjust the food type where appropriate.

Where the cat food and water bowl are usually placed in the bridge deck is along the walkway to the front cockpit door. This is usually not a problem except that in the process of learning how to efficiently feed with his collar Tiger would often get food stuck inside the plastic underneath his chin. In order to try and get to this food, he would arch his neck backwards, usually throwing his body backward in the process. That is all well and good but it provides an off balance situation (something unusual for a cat) and in that specific location - one just above the stairs - he was liable to fall backwards down the stair well.

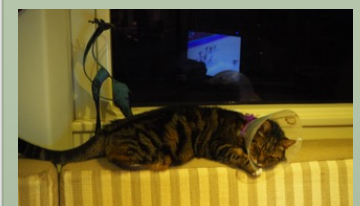
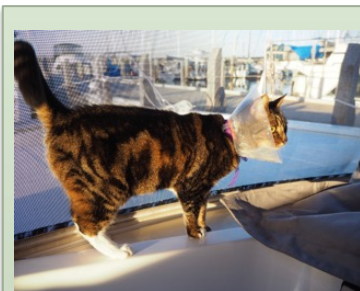


So, in order to avoid this and other risks, overnight he was locked downstairs with us. He was still walking into walls and the base of the stairs (and our legs) but at least, (apart from the step into our head and his litter tray), the floor was flat. The one stair up to access the closed 'privacy door' was 'nudged' hopefully as, being a nocturnal animal, he was quite miffed that we had taken away his freedom to roam upstairs and look at what was going on outside.

In order for me to discourage this 'nudging' (scratching) at the sliding (privacy) door (he couldn't open it, it was latched shut be he didn't know this) I slept on the couch, which was almost within arms distance to the leading edge of the sliding door. Thus, when I heard Tiger scratch at the door face I could almost lean across and give him a slight tap on the bum to discourage him. Because this was an 'almost' it meant I did actually have to adjust myself out of the bed (off the couch) and as this was a regular occurrence (humans are not nocturnal) it meant I got very little sleep. The downstairs hallway floor, usually just the marine ply laminate, was dotted with towels, a fake sheepskin square for him to sleep on, a basket from upstairs to sleep in and a towel with a water bowl and a food bowl on it. It usually took several goes to settle Tiger and eventually he would give up on the hope of getting upstairs, leave the door and settle himself

down. For the first few days he was too clumsy to do anything but settle himself on the towel and the fake sheepskin but soon he realised he was getting the raw end of the deal. His attempts at getting on the bed were improving and becoming more frequent and often I'd wake up, turning over uncomfortably on the couch, to discover the cat was not on the floor beside me but in my usual position in MY bed! I let him be - at least he was not scratching the door. I do however not remember the circumstances of the evening when Tiger managed to curl up on the couch and I woke up on the floor!

Relief came 15 days after the operation. The cone could come off!



Tiger managed his best to get comfortable, but hard plastic against the cheek is not what one is used to!



Ahh....to feel softness at last!

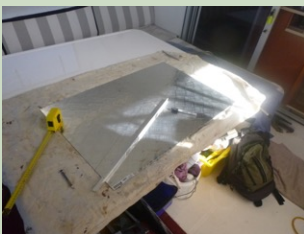
Of course, being on 24 hour watch meant that at least one of us had to be on board at all times. Hence there was no exploring and no socializing off boat, and any social interaction had to be people visiting us that we already knew. Tiger was stressed enough with a cone on his head and a sore bum; I was not going to introduce new people and new smells into the mix. Given the enforced stay on boat we managed to get a few maintenance jobs done. Andrew changed the oil, changed the generator impellor, and completed (I wont say started from scratch because the design has been in his head for some years) the anchor locker for the tinnie). I got some polishing done - but not a lot – the days were unfortunately exceptionally hot and I could only work a short while in the mornings. (What I was pleased with though, was we managed to find a stockist of the original polish I had got for this boat three and a half years ago! (Top Gear) It is the only polish I have tried that I have been really happy with but have been unable to efficiently locate it when I've needed it around the country. I made sure we stocked up on this before we left Fremantle.)

During this time we seemed also to spend an inordinate amount of time watching the television, which is something we rarely do (not withstanding that we are usually out of television reception range anyway). We became very familiar with the Winter Olympics, managing to see the opening ceremony and all three of Australia's medal wins. We were disappointed with the coverage though. We would have loved to see a few more sports – Curling would have been great – but to see those you needed to 'download the App.' Not everyone has a tablet and not everyone wants to use their download allowance on the Olympics. We have a tablet but it doesn't have much capacity. I can't see why Channel 7 could not have shown delays of the other sports when they were showing repeats in the afternoon! I guess it was a commercial decision and not one directed from the Olympic Media.



We finally got to the E shed markets on a market day. We have yet to fly the kite we purchased there.

Project: Anchor Locker.



This project and its design has been in Andrew's head for some years, and we even bought a new, slightly smaller anchor to make it an easier construction. The materials have been on board since the east coast and our enforced stay where we had access to good power meant Andrew finally got around to finishing the tinnie anchor locker.

Mandurah



22nd Feb 2018. Four months to the day after arriving in the Fremantle area (anchoring just off Rottnest Island on 22nd October), we finally dropped the lines from the Fremantle Sailing Club Collector Jetty and left the area behind (ironically without ever exploring Rottnest Island). At 0620 we were motoring out of the FSC marina. There had been no wind so we could actually push Sengo away from the dock. And that was the problem – there was no wind. The forecast had been for easterlies and then north easterlies – so we expected a lovely beam reach and then possibly a spinnaker run on our way to Mandurah. But the wind was so light and fickle (doing 360's) that the motors were on for two thirds of the trip. Eventually we got south westerlies and then westerlies; wind conditions that had come in several hours earlier than the predications. Of course we took full advantage of what we could and we were sailing between 6 and 7.5 knots that final 2.5 hours before dropping the sails and heading up into the estuary entrance at Mandurah. Inside, the conditions were mild and we tied up on the public jetty inland from the marina entrance. It was 1430 and I wasn't mentally exhausted but my body felt hot and I was shaking (as far as I was concerned I hadn't picked up any nasty bugs). It was time for a rest.

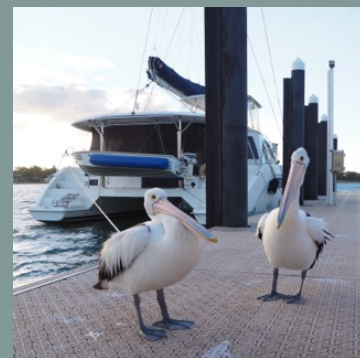
Because we had been introducing Tiger to a new mixed diet I hadn't got a lot of the new brew. I rang the closest vet to where we were and I had missed the ordering cut off the day before. The next closest vet was 3.2 kilometres away, a would-be 6.4 return walk. They had one box and I asked them to hold it. We wouldn't be around long

enough to wait for an order; we were only here to sit out a strong wind warning, but I would grab anything I could get. At around 1700, *Ophelia*, (a boat we'd met in Darwin who overtook us in the Kimberley (without us seeing him)) arrived for sun downers.

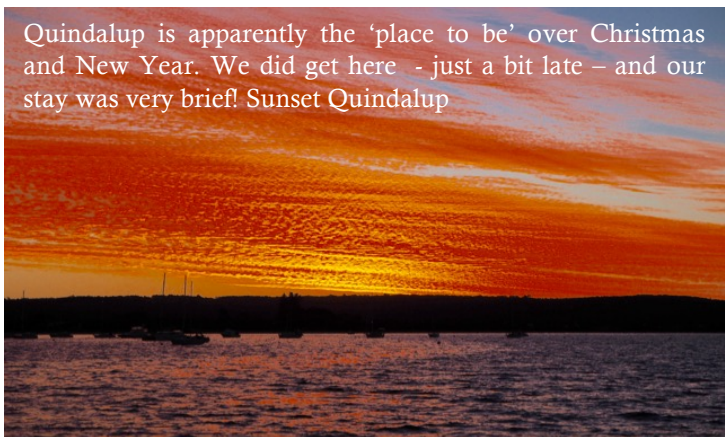
Our 'rest' day was busy. *Ophelia* very kindly drove me to the vet to pick up the food on hold -which I very much appreciated because the morning was overcast, cold and windy. We then caught up with *Grand Cru* for lunch (another boat we hadn't seen since Darwin) in a lovely restaurant at Dawesville marina (we couldn't have got there otherwise, the bridge over the Dawesville cut is only 17 meters high; significantly lower than our 24 meter air draft). Dinner turned out to be with *Ophelia* and *Sunny Girl* (yet a third boat we hadn't seen since Darwin). From a social point of view it was an exhausting day.

The public jetty just beyond the entrance to the marina (funded by the Department of Transport, the Department of Regional Development and the City of Mandurah), is relatively new, is floating and has room for several boats, although the only other boat we saw here was doing a pickup (in awkwardly windy conditions). The dock is also popular for fishing, and several groups were trying their luck behind us during the day and a half of our stay. There was even one hopeful local who was trying his luck at prawning when we came back in the dark from dinner. Apparently the prawns are fickle and it depends on the state of the tide (and weather) if any are caught on this little jetty. There is of course no 'official security' so we made sure our possessions were inside and the engines locked off...but the neighbourhood doesn't look too rough so I am doubting there are too many around with ill intent.

The 'unofficial security' is shared between a pair of pelicans during the day and a pair of Rufus night herons during the evening.



Quindalup is apparently the 'place to be' over Christmas and New Year. We did get here - just a bit late - and our stay was very brief! Sunset Quindalup



Mandurah to Quindaup to Augusta

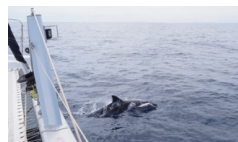
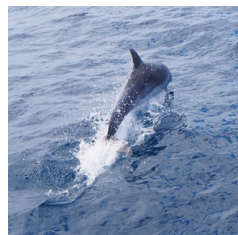
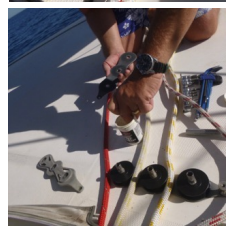
24th – 25th February. The dock lines were off at 0620 and at 0630 we were back at sea. It was calm in the estuary and wasn't too bad outside, the wind strength not quite the 15-20 predicted when we set the sails, but it did increase soon after. The sea state wasn't too bad either and the swell reasonable but it was still a slightly bumpy ride, (although no hard juddering occurred). Sengo sailed well – doing 7, 8, and 9 knots. We noticed a helicopter on AIS a few nautical miles to the west and the radio traffic was talking about a search for a gentleman lost out of an upturned boat. We automatically assumed a fisherman (because there was a strong wind warning the day before and their breed often do crazy things like going out in rough seas). Unfortunately the search was for the skipper of the yacht Finistere, a Fremantle Sailing Cub Boat with ocean racing experience, which had lost its keel in the heavy conditions around midnight the night before. There had been an official strong wind warning out but it was the middle of the Fremantle to Bunbury and back yacht race. We didn't know this at the time and when we passed *Indian* within 50 or so meters (and I am a bit miffed I didn't have the nous to get a photo of the crew waving as it will be the last time we are likely to see this boat), we automatically assumed they were coming back from the race week at Busselton. Tragically two people lost their lives– four were rescued.

Our arrival into Quindalup was just after 1800 and we had had the motor on for only the last 40 minutes or so. Because the sail by the afternoon had become so smooth we ended up replacing the line sheaths on the deck on the run; the cracked and shattered sheaths replaced with fancy new specially moulded black plastic ones. Someone

should have told me to be gentle though; on replacing the top cover I cracked the outside plastic with a slightly over enthusiastic turn of the screwdriver. We had a quick chat to *Salina* and email discussion of intentions with *Scaramouch* (who were sitting at Busselton) before deciding to head to Augusta. This was going to be at least a 15-hour sail.

The gap of six hours between our arrival and departure at Quindalup had us preparing for the next leg and hardly any sleep was had. The anchor was up at midnight and after thirty minutes of motor-sailing the engines went off. This trip was a little more lively than the trip south from Mandurah, true wind speed getting close to 30 knots and boat speed averaging around the 9 to 10 knot mark (the 11.5 noted briefly on the gauge was probably due to surfing down a wave). As we had been advised to stay well off the coast we lost a couple of hours going out and getting back, hence our arrival scheduled for the 'calm' predicted winds in Augusta was about two hours later than we had hoped. We did however have a fantastic escort of a large pod of dolphins (50 plus) around the bottom of the reef of Cape Leeuwin. It was a delight to see so many!

This delay in our timing however meant we were docking in 15 (ish) knots on a blow off jetty. It was a struggle to get Sengo close and Andrew had to back into the dock. Once I got on and tied both ends of Sengo to the dock (which was a challenge in itself) we had to work out how to get her closer. Fighting the wind AND trying to move her down the dock at the same time didn't work so when *Lacepede* came down to help we just got her tied up properly so we could at least get on and off board. As it turned out Dennis from DoT didn't say anything about our position when he came down the next morning anyway.





Augusta

26th February 2018. To some extent Augusta was an enforced day's stay (had we kept going we would have been caught up in a nasty strong wind warning!) but we are glad we stopped. The offer of being taken to a morning coffee by a local boat did not eventuate (which was a pity because another offer into town wasn't taken up due to waiting for the first, non-existent ride). When we did finally decide that a pub meal in town might be nice we decided to walk – and then we looked outside. Augusta township is several kilometres away from the Augusta Boat Harbour and we found ourselves looking at very dark, grey, ominous clouds. The clouds did not disappoint and they shortly let go a small downpour. Fortunately by this time however, we'd secured a lift into town by *Kome Nova* (who had fortuitously turned up just at the right time!)



The pub at Augusta has got to have the best view from any pub bistro that I've ever seen. Andrew had steak and I had the locally caught river whiting, although I can't say it was a particularly tasty fish. A quick walk around town had us visiting the second hand book shop, the info centre, a fishing shop, the hardware store, the local IGA and the museum. By this time the sun was out and we decided to walk back. There are four 'walks' on the town map, each with a theme but very few interps boards.



The Augusta Museum is located in a non-descript reddish brick building that was built as a hall in 1964. It is a typical local museum, manned by volunteers with a mixture of interps styles and sizes, some of which are copies of book pages and really too small to read. Interps and artifacts relate to local history, navigation, shipwrecks, and local families. There is also a section dedicated to whale and dolphin strandings. It is always hit and miss whether I get Andrew into a museum. His normal quip is that he has 'seen enough chamber pots and bed pans' – and funnily enough there were two in this museum. There were also several old pianos and other artifacts belonging to early





settlers of the area. Artifacts from the SS Percles wreck were also on display as well as the decompression chamber used constantly in the dive to recover them.

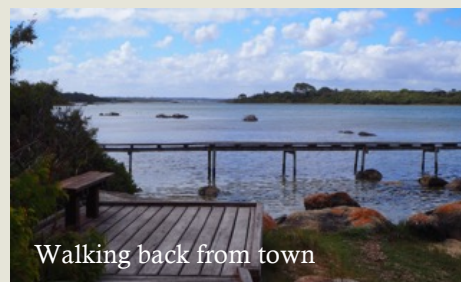
We timed it well. It started to rain again just as we got back to the boat.

Augusta is a quant little town and the Blackwood River is apparently 'navigable for shoal draft vessels 12 nautical miles up stream'. The river mouth is closed for access with sand bars but there is a cut which would probably require local knowledge to traverse – it all looks so shallow. I would like to think we could get in however, there was a power cat anchored up the river - but it was not clear how long it had been there. If we can get up the river I wouldn't mind spending some time here on our next visit.

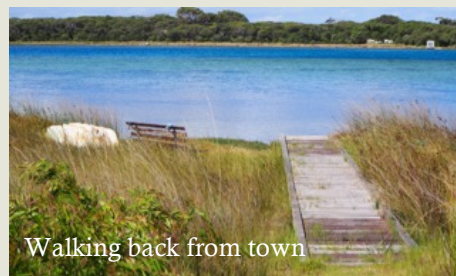
Old infrastructure looked unused but we saw one isolated fish cleaning station occupied.



Walking back from town



Walking back from town



Walking back from town



Walking back from town



Walking back from town

Augusta was one location settled initially by 'Group Settlement' a Western Australian government sponsored initiative where groups of people were 'deposited' in unsettled areas to work together to provide produce and community. Initially Augusta's scheme only lasted around ten years with most families moving out to other (assumed more productive) areas. The Bussells, for instance, went on to settle and name the area around Busselton. Clearly there was later settlement and whilst I wouldn't call the town bustling, it is very popular for weekenders and fishermen.



Approaching West Cape Howe

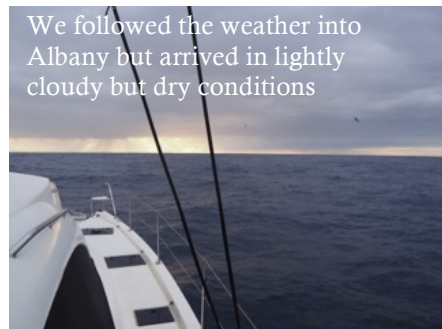


witness to an animated and vocal drama.

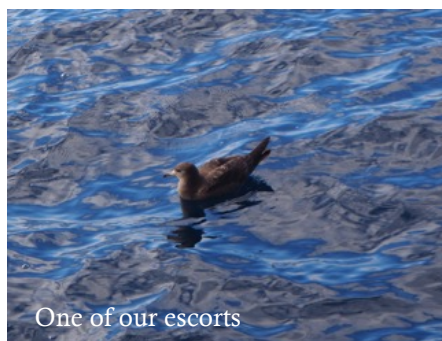
Safely off, I found because the boat had been under so much tension, that I couldn't undo three of the lines on the cleats and left Andrew to finish the job once we were safely out of the harbour. He even struggled with one of these and it was subsequently tied to the rail for the rest of the trip (at least it was already set up for the next stop).

The wind angle was good – of sorts – and we found ourselves travelling along the inside of Flinders Bay. A few tacks were needed to round the corner (Point D'Entrecasteaux and its associated reefs) and we headed steadily toward Albany. As night fell we found ourselves escorted by a flock of shearwaters and two albatross. As dawn the next day emerged, this group was still there. We were still quite close to the coast and subsequently not at the right angle to take advantage of the drop and shift in wind conditions. As a result the motors went on. Unfortunately the motors stayed on several hours longer than preferred as when the wind did pick up we were still too close to the shore to do anything about it – tacking from that perspective would have us heading almost backwards and we would lose significant distance and time just to get into a more favourable position. The decision was made to leave the motors on and get into Albany at a respectable time. Turning north into King George Sound was a delight; the engines went off and the wind moved us at a very respectable clip. A few gybes were needed to make the shipping lanes toward the Town Marina and we were welcomed in initially by the local sailing instructor. After a DoT induction it was a quick run to pick up a car and get Tiger to the vet.

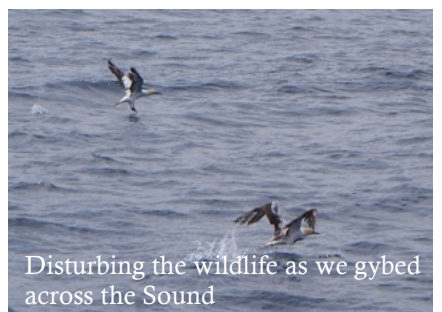
We followed the weather into Albany but arrived in lightly cloudy but dry conditions



One of our escorts



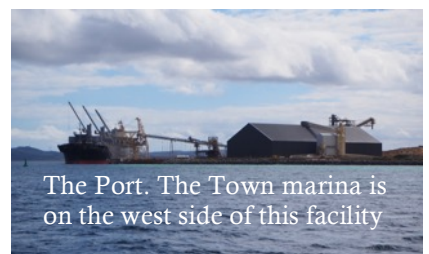
Disturbing the wildlife as we gybed across the Sound



Entering the Sound



The Port. The Town marina is on the west side of this facility



Augusta to Albany

27th -28th February 2018. It was unfortunately blowing around 15 knots when we left Augusta. You might think this a good thing on a blow off jetty but the two external ropes at the extremes of the boat tying us down were not long enough to be fed back to the boat so an argument ensued as to how to proceed. If we took the front one off, we probably wouldn't have time to get back to the back one before we pivoted to far and hit the dock, and if we took the back one off first whoever was on the jetty wouldn't get back on board. Small engine revs were used to some help but in the end it was a very small lull in the wind (a matter of seconds) that allowed Andrew to untie us and get back on board. The three middle ropes were tied back to Sengo so I could easily dislodge them but I had to do it quickly so we could get away cleanly. The nearby boat ramp is covered by both DoT cameras and Fisheries cameras so if anyone wants to rerun footage they will be

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