

Aboard Sengo

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February 2020



Waiting on the Gold Coast

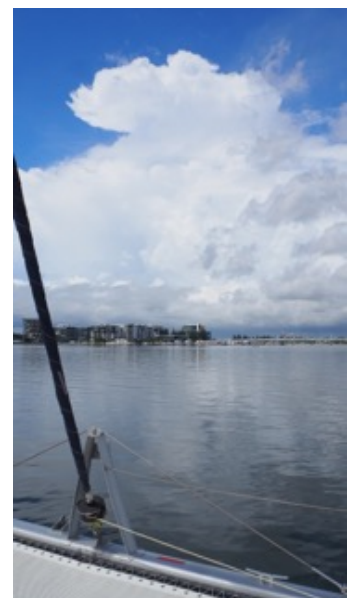
Wet weather & postal pickups!





The first few days of February were uneventful. In fact most of February was uneventful... and options for exploring or exercising limited due to weather, and (mostly) grabbed when the opportunity arose. However between rain and medical advice....we took what little exercise we could. Andrew is itching for a sail but instead It was a month of waiting – predominantly due to our laxidasical attitude. But where were we going to go? There was no point going south as we still want to go north for some distance this sailing season...And we couldn't go north until we had received all our mail, and because we kept organising it in spits and starts we weren't going too far away from our postal retrieval options - getting an education on how to get our post when it is not getting delivered to an Australia Post office.

We also got wet! On top of the normal rain of the 'storm season', which finally arrived(!), Ex Cyclone Uesi managed to also dump a fair load of water on us. On the up side we had a lot of fun researching and ordering new hiking gear.



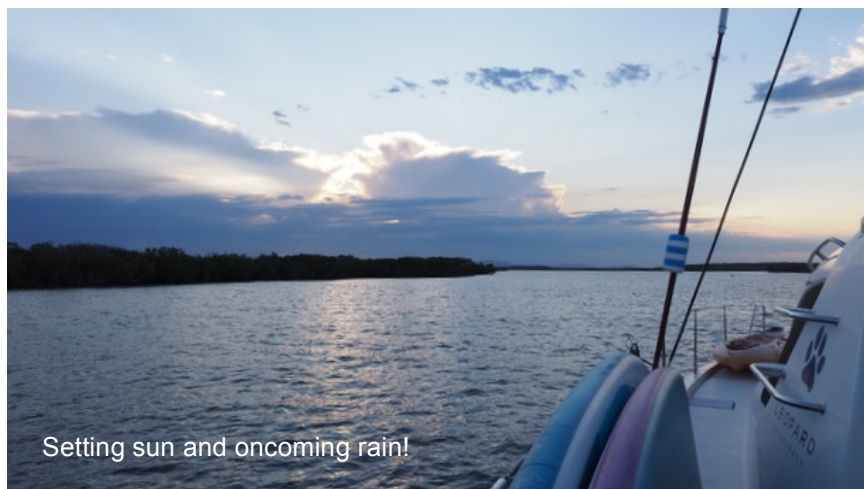
1st February 2020. The first of February was a rest day. It was hot and there was no rain. Despite being a weekend we copped surprisingly few bow waves – but that is the advantage of being on the west side of Crab Island – the main channel is on the east side. Andrew spent the day fishing and reading. I finished off sewing the back shade that I'd started whilst we were at Hope Harbour Marina. I also managed some tidying, reading and holiday planning

2nd February 2020. Sometimes Andrew has the capacity to surprise me. Whilst it is often when out, usually shopping, that his tolerance for an extended day dissipates before mine does, occasionally his energy sees no bounds. Perhaps it is just because it is 'shopping'? I wanted to do another walk – the hike boots needed to be broken in after all, but the best time to be off boat today was early in the morning. Andrew of course isn't a morning person but I eventually got him to shore. To change the scenery I decided we would head south, with the aim of turning around at Quota Park on the coast between Runaway Bay and Labrador

When we got there however Andrew was keen to go on, and whilst my feet weren't hurting my legs were getting a bit lethargic. The suggestion of heading down to the Catalina Café for lunch was a bit too ambitious and we turned around approximately 3 kilometres short of that at Labrador. Of course it was now around lunch time, the predicted wind (15-20 knots) had arrived and we got an extra workout walking against the breeze on the way north. The northerly breeze also meant it was a challenge getting back to boat.

3rd February 2020. You've got to grab enthusiasm when it is with you, and opportunities when the weather allows. This morning winds were due to be light – relatively speaking; like yesterday it was this afternoon that was going to hold its challenges. We headed across to shore again, strolled up to Paradise Point for a cuppa, and strolled back to Runaway

Bay Shopping Centre, picking up my new spectacles – which had been delivered from Southport by their shared audiometrist – as opposed to the first option they gave me – a \$10 charge to send them back to Melbourne and then back to the Gold Coast – for a net distance of around 7 kilometres! Grateful I could now see clearly again – having been using a four year old prescription, we then headed back to boat to prepare to move anchorage. Fearing we were going to lose internet reception when we moved we fiddled around to book some flights before picking up the anchor. Unfortunately we took longer than expected so by the time we moved it was blowing between 20-30 knots! Our first choice of anchorage to sit out the blow was not available as despite not being a weekend Tipplers Anchorage was already full of boats. The second choice was Dux Anchorage but after three attempted and unsuccessful goes at setting the anchor we gave up and headed for Plan C, Tiger Mullet Channel. Each time we go past the end of Tiger Mullet Channel it seems that the anchorage south of Green Island is full of boats – there has to be something in that; it is clearly popular – and very protected. South of the Island the anchorage held four vessels. We anchored to the west of the island, put 50 meters of chain out to sustain us in the expected blow and sat down to wait for the rain. The anchor went down to the setting sun ... and the oncoming storm clouds. And then it rained.



Setting sun and oncoming rain!

4th – 10th February 2020. West of Green Island. Waiting out the Rain.

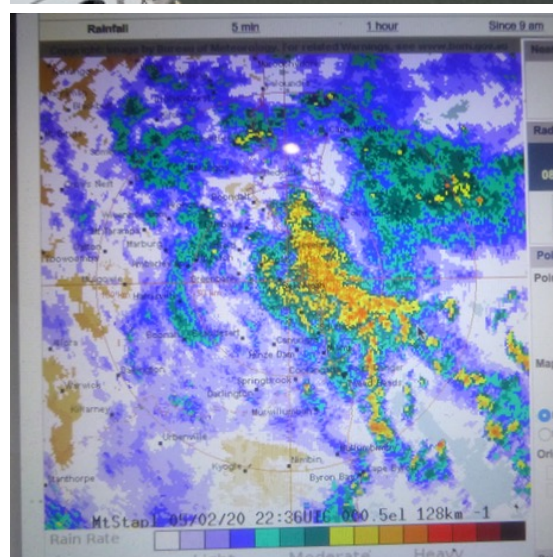
The weather predictions were mainly right: there was a lot of rain. There were also some pretty big winds although we never saw winds on the gauges more than the high 20s. But sometimes the forecasts just didn't pan out. There were several mornings where winds were due to be 20 plus knots but there was hardly a whisper on the water. Whilst we were grateful for the occasional respite in the wind and the rain, this did mean an invasion of mozzies and midgies!

4th February 2020. I cleaned the anchor well of dirt – it still needs a rust run – One of the motor boats from Green Island moved – to be lined up in front of us when the wind swung to south east!

5th February 2020. What wind? Despite predictions most of the morning was relatively calm with the odd gust – but there was quite a bit of rain. Another small power boat moved from the Green Island anchorage to just to the west of us. The big motor boat that had moved yesterday moved on and a fishing boat arrived to use the protection of Green Island.

6th February 2020. It rained all day! Another catamaran turned up but we don't know them. We noticed a small mono was towed out of the area by a rescue boat but we hadn't had the radio on so don't know the details.

7th February 2020. We actually went visiting today. **Kia Orana** had contacted us as we were struggling to find anchorage at Dux, because they were unhappy with their position at Perry's Hole and were looking for another option. We've stayed at Perry's Hole several times – the holding is good but there is one almighty dance when the wind and tide hit the music. Perry's Hole was going to be our reluctant Plan D for this blow, fortunately our Tiger Mullet anchorage held fast immediately and was very comfortable. Seeing this **Kia Orana** joined us but the weather hadn't been conducive to catching up for several days. As it was



Forecast issued at 4:10 pm EST on Friday 7 February 2020.

	Fri. 7 Feb.	Sat. 8 Feb.	Sun. 9 Feb.	Mon. 10 Feb.	Tue. 11 Feb.	Wed. 12 Feb.	Thu. 13 Feb.
	Showers, Possible storm	Showers, Possible storm	Showers, Possible storm	Showers	Showers	Shower or two	Shower or two
Max. Temperature	28 °C	28 °C	30 °C	29 °C	29 °C	30 °C	30 °C
Min. Temperature	21 °C	22 °C	23 °C	23 °C	22 °C	22 °C	22 °C



we arrived just before the next rain storm but spent a lovely time with them over morning coffee and nibbles. The rest of the day was spent finishing the newsletter and we tackled more of the first jigsaw that we'd started in January – a sunset picture of the Narooma coastline which is wrapped inside our living room table. Most boats in the area moved on – by the end of today only the new unknown cat was left with us in the anchorage

8th February 2020. Rain. And at around 1135 the first bout of thunder surprised us – rain, thunder and lightening occupied the rest of the day.

9th February. Rain on and off – sometimes light, sometimes heavy

Andrew played with some zips (getting them working again). I did a bad sewing job on some hiking pants. We both read, there was not much else to do. I started our holiday itinerary, researched sleeping mats (we are looking for something more comfortable than our existing $\frac{3}{4}$ length models) and read.

10th February 2020. I was up at 0630. It was cloudy and mainly overcast. I ordered a heater for Monty's main bedroom (rental property), ordered a new sleeping mat for hiking, and continued on more of our itinerary for the middle of the year. At 0950 there was still no rain and Andrew suggested a kayak trip. We should have perhaps started a bit earlier to work with the tide, as it is strong where we were anchored, but this was the first time we used the canoe paddles with the kayak. It was of course a mismatch. Andrew was brought up canoeing on the Murray River during school holidays, and he's spent time canoeing near the arctic. I have no canoeing technique or experience – and probably overdid it a bit – a brace was needed for the next few days.



Canoe paddies on the kayak ... stranger things....



Apart from the hard task-master it was a nice paddle –until the clouds took over and it got cold and started to rain



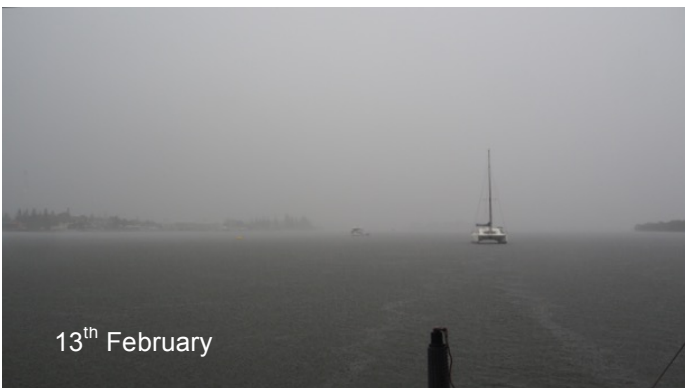
11th February. The things you see transported on buses!



12th February



13th February



13th February

Crab Island

11th We moved back to Crab island and closer to civilisation today so we could stretch our legs. After getting to shore we grabbed a bus to Harbour Town where we managed to get some more hiking gear, pick up our rain coats that had been left for repair (but we had been quoted the same price as new jackets so we thought we'd have a go at fixing them ourselves (specialized glue)), got wet as the afternoon rain came down and finally after a food shop at Runaway Bay got back to boat.

12th February 2020. At around 0600 when I looked out the window there was blue sky and high cumulous and I was going to suggest an early walk – yesterday morning had been clear if not humid. But when I got up just a few minutes later I spied grey to the south and grey to the north – a pigeon pair so to speak and when I looked at bom.gov.au I could see why. At around 0700 the rain came down, and one clap of thunder gave us a temporary fright. It ended up being a wet day on boat.

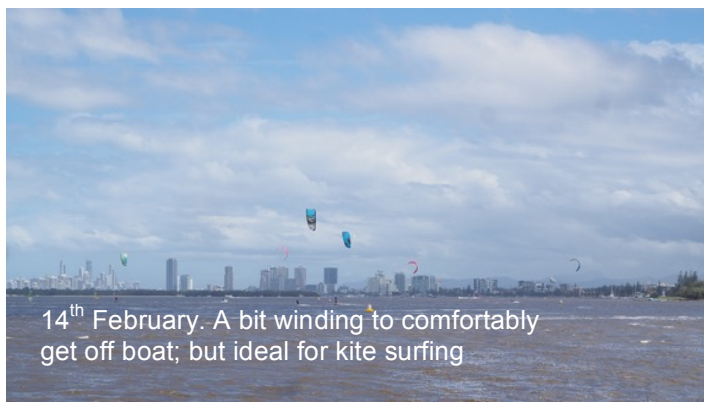
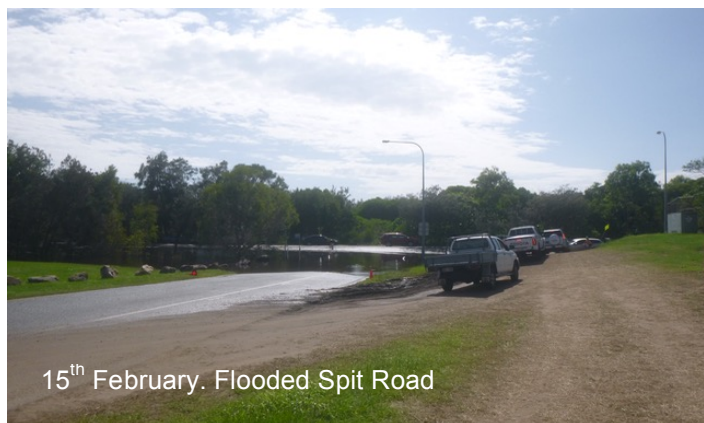
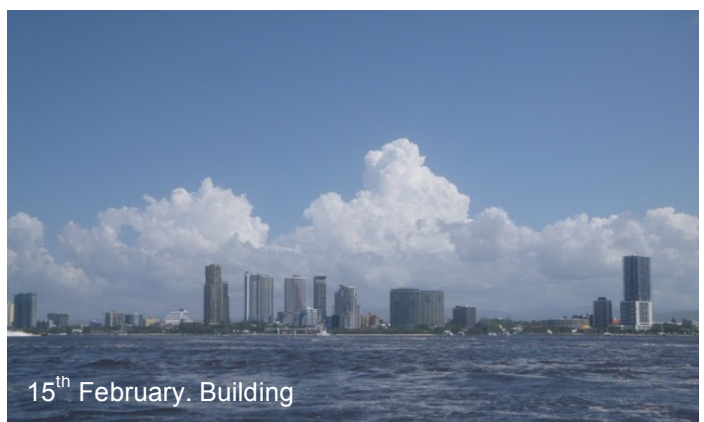
13 February 2020. We felt like drowned rats. But other clichés could have included – ‘as wet as shags’ or ‘missed it by that much’. And they would all be right..... By 0900 this morning Seaway had got just over 177 mm in 24 hours. And there was more to come! There was a small gap in the rain to get to shore but we didn't move quick enough and we were drenched by the time we got to Runaway Bay Centre (if we'd have left Sengo 5 minutes earlier we would have been dry); although we tried, we both gave up trying to dry our clothes with the hand dryer in the centre's toilets. I suppose I could have cancelled my podiatrist appointment – I did last week due to the weather - but we had an appointment with a techy at Telstra for my phone connection problems as well and as this issue had been hanging around a while, we made the decision to go to shore.

The walk to the poddy was a swim, choosing the wrong side of the road and waddling up to my thighs in water past the flooding roundabout, riding out the bow waves from cars, some of which were too small to be dealing with that much water, only to find the new orthotics had been cut

13th February: Runaway Bay Centre Jetty13th February: Runaway Bay Centre Jetty

too short and I had to come back in a weeks' time anyway (the practice had towels out for us, but they were almost certain we weren't going to turn up). The Telstra visit didn't prove fruitful either – the 'expert' hadn't got to work because of the weather and that left us with a self confessed jack-of-all trades who didn't now how to deal with the problem. Of course we'd been distracted in December when we could have returned the phone to Telstra for them to sort it out, but the tests that were conducted today indicated that now it might be a Samsung problem (having ascertained that it wasn't the age of our computers that was an issue) so we were directed to Samsung to fix. Of course the only Samsung 'outlet' on the Gold Coast is in Robina – not accessible by boat and a pain to access from our anchorage by public transport. On top of this we found, as we'd taken our computers across to try and sort out the problem with my phone, that our 'dry bags are no longer 'dry' and the computers got wet! Fortunately they dried out with no adverse effects.

18th February 2020. Wind and some rain dominated the 14th February but by the 15th the adverse weather had started to abate, the sun was out, there was blue sky and any hint of rough weather wasn't due until the afternoon. Desperate for some exercise and partially sick of walking the same routes from Runaway Bay we took the tinnie on a long trip and tied it up to the public jetty near Marine Stadium (Bums Bay). Ideally we would normally head into the re-vegetated area east of the spit road to go bird watching but that wasn't possible.

14th February. A bit winding to comfortably get off boat; but ideal for kite surfing15th February. Flooded Spit Road15th February. Building

The first indication something wasn't quite normal was the line of cars heading into the car park near the boat ramp, - that *didn't* have boat trailers on them. A hundred or so meters further on we worked out why. The tremendous amount of rain that had fallen over the past few days had flooded the road and anyone who wanted to get to the Seaway had to take a dirt detour track into the boat ramp car park and continue around the blockage. The detour was steep and many cars turned around. It was okay for 4wd's but we did see one low set vehicle make the attempt. The tremendous cracking sound the split front fender made as he drove it into the hill didn't deter him, he just repositioned his vehicle and drove through the next 'crack'; he obviously has money – his front fender was ruined.

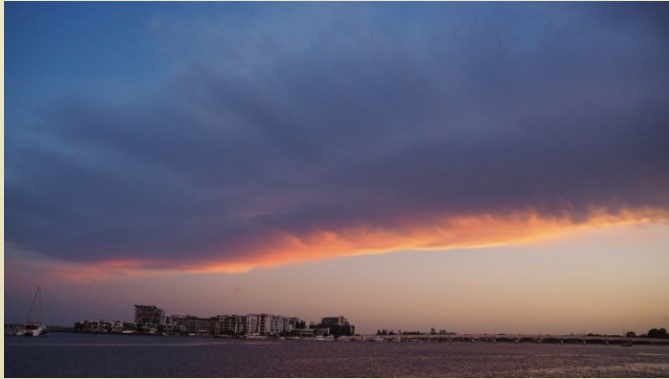


The unexpected sight of a frigate bird

From this position we could have headed north toward the Seaway or south toward Southport and whilst the Seaway had more appeal, I was starting to feel a rub mark on my right foot (a surprise as despite the fact I was wearing the new hiking boots, they hadn't given me any real issues on the previous walks) and so we turned south toward Mariners Cove and the possibility of a pharmacy. Leucotape plastered over my developing blister did the trick and we sat down in the shade to enjoy a break. We ended up spending the next couple of hours catching up with **Arrabella** before consuming a quick lunch and heading back.

Whilst there was no rain in the morning there was still a lot of moisture in the air and combined with the heat I managed to get dehydrated. I got home feeling sick and uncomfortable and had developed an almighty headache. The effect was such that I was unable to get off boat for Sunday, and Monday was spent travel planning.

On Tuesday morning we moved, having spent a week off Crab Island, and we managed to secure a spot back at Paradise Point. With the forecast for Wednesday to be possible storms we took the opportunity to hire a car and get down to Robina and Samsung. In the end my phone issue wasn't a Samsung problem after all. *But* it was a Samsung rep who worked out what the problem was – in fact, it was a staff member from Samsung Head Office in Brisbane - nice to have the Big Cheese on your side – and so after several minutes of eliminating issues and working out it was in fact a Telstra problem, he chaperoned us down to Telstra to get the connection sorted. And it was sorted in a matter of seconds – pity the techy at Runaway Bay didn't know what he was doing, it would have saved us a lot of frustration – AND the cost of a hire car! A big plus to the Samsung stand at the Robina Shopping Centre (thanks Luke and your sidekick whose name I was very remiss at not getting) BUT a big minus to the Samsung techies on the phone a few days earlier – who, whilst I realise now they couldn't have solved the problem, were very vague and avoided my request for a contact number for the Samsung Robina site. Of course this wouldn't have helped in the end. Samsung has a mid isle set up (a set up I should have realised was a possibility because I'd first seen this arrangement at Werribee Plaza in Victoria) but you think I could have at least had that explained to me). So we suffered the expense of a car... that we didn't really need. We did however achieve a few little extras at Robina. We sorted out our international driving licenses (not technically needed for where we are going but needed for our insurance), got a new pair of binoculars, purchased some new merino thermals (because I've lost mine in the bows of the boat somewhere), purchased new waterproof pants (because the ones we both have are disintegrating after 25 years) and completed several other minor jobs. It was a long day and we got back to boat as the sun was setting. Other achievements today were holiday related: hire car booked, final air flights booked, and itinerary items approved



19th February 2020. After returning the car and a quick shop on the way back we spent the rest of the day on boat. The forecast was for evening storms. And boy did those north of us cop it. We had watched the clouds develop during the evening to our west. And www.bom.gov.au at one point showed two storms merging. But we got about 6 drops, and we sat comfortably in the front cockpit enjoying the light show.



20th February 2020. Have you ever picked the disintegrating internals of a very old *Sea to Summit* compression sack from a fluffy pair of camp tracksuit pants? It is not fun. And it looks and feels like picking off the ash from a fire, the sticky bits disintegrating onto your fingers. And it was a half hour exercise. I was not expecting to be attending to this afternoon. We have three of these stuff compression sacks that we use for overnight hiking – two of them are fine. The third I was packing gear into for a pre pack test for our holiday excursion later in the year when I discovered the problem. Fortunately I had only packed three items in the sack ..and fortunately only one of those items ended up covered in the stuff. Mentally I really wasn't prepared for it because physically I was exhausted and I just wanted to rest.

Yesterday we actually got some exercise and although not much (a half hour walk after dropping the hire car back and a 20 minute paddle board in the early afternoon) it was at least something after minimal opportunity over the past week and a half. Today we went for some exercise of substance.

The convenience of ordering hiking gear on-line becomes a bit complicated when the couriers the retailers use don't deliver to Australia post locations (Aust Post won't accept couriers) so plan b in this case was to get the goods delivered to a Parcel Point. There are a couple of Parcel Points within around an hour's walk of Paradise Point however the one at Hope Island is really only going to be accessible if we are anchored at Paradise Point or docked in the marina at Hope Harbour. The Labrador location however gives us the option of a good walk from Paradise Point, a medium walk if we are anchored off Crab Island at Runaway Bay or a more convenient stroll if we anchor off Wave Island or near the Labrador beach. This location is also across the road from the Harbour Town Outlet shopping centre making it a convenient spot to attach to a shopping trip as well. Today's itinerary started before 10 am, heading across to the jetty at Paradise Point, and then getting the bus to runaway bay for my podiatrist appointment, before getting another bus to Harbour Town. After a stroll around the shops we picked up two parcels from the secure pickup point at National Storage (behind locked gates) before walking back to Paradise Point. I estimate it was around 6.5 kilometres; a good walk in the heat to get the heart pumping, but a short walk compared with the level of track fitness we are aiming to achieve over the next few months. Of course when we got back to boat

we just wanted to take our shoes off, put our feet up, and enjoy a cool drink. I didn't expect to be picking old thin plastic off my clothing with sticky tape!

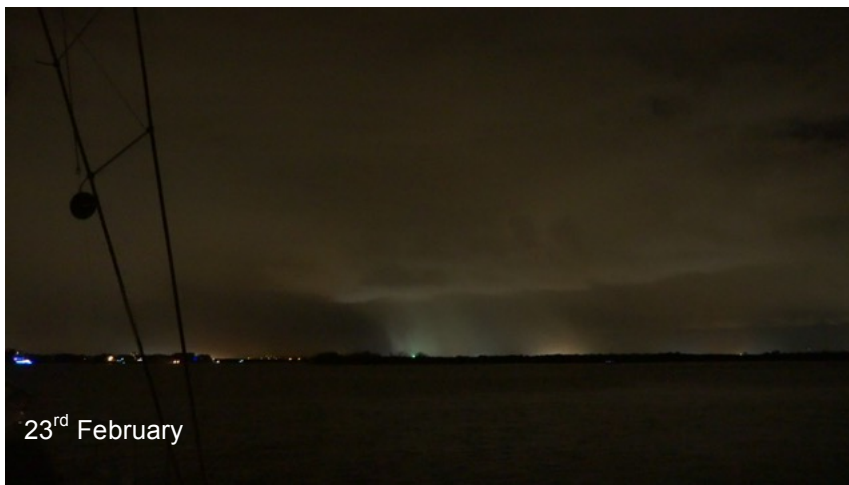
21st February 2020. Having put the chiropractor off for three weeks I finally turned up today - only for her to put me off another. Whilst on shore however we took the opportunity to pick up our mail and head to the laundrette at Runaway Bay Marina. Three loads of washing done we walked back to Paradise Point for Andrew to misplace his pocket knife. He had used it to bust open the powder for the machine but couldn't find it in the usual pocket in his pack By this time it is around 1300 and I sent him off to get something to eat whilst I head back to the marina – usually a 20 or so minute walk. I managed to convince a bus driver to drop me off free of charge and raced into the facility. No knife. So after leaving a message with marina management, the klein café that runs the machines and a note on the machine that was still working I hoofed it back to Paradise Point. Andrew was comfortably sitting under a tree in the shade chatting to the owner of a neighbouring boat. When we finally got back on board he found his knife!!! (Hidden in the bowels of his pack!) Of course we hadn't eaten



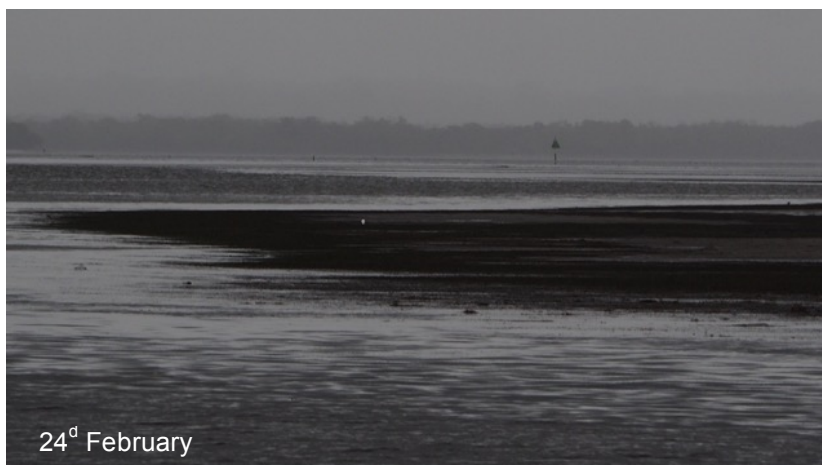
much so by the time I made pancakes for lunch it was around 1500 and lowish tide – we could almost step off the back step to the sand beyond and we discovered we were facing the opposite direction to everyone else in the anchorage. As soon as we were able 5 meters of chain was pulled in.

22nd February 2020. A lazy day on boat.

23rd February 2020. We moved from Paradise Point to Crab Island. There were no boats anchored there and after a couple of hours we knew why. Wind against tide was almost completely untenable. Some gusts were uncomfortably strong and with a fair fetch we were dancing around, In the end we picked up anchor and headed to Browns Gutter – where it was much more comfortable. A pleasant evening was spent doing a bit of bird watching on the sand flats at low tide.



24th February 2020. With 90 per cent chance of rain we didn't move and spent the day with more holiday planning and a bit of tidying up. The wind was still up and rain came across in bursts.

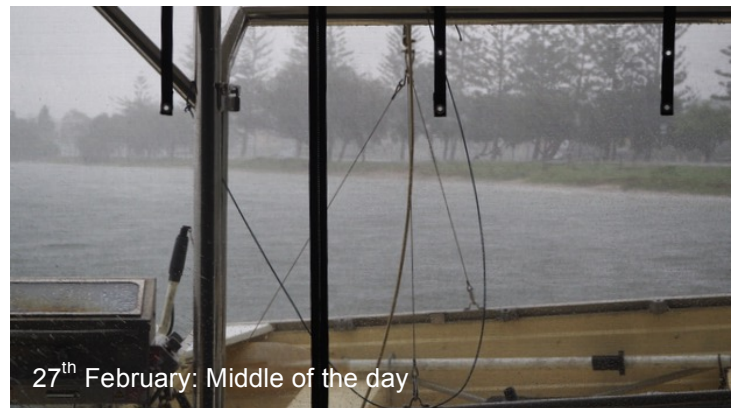


25th February 2020. After waking up to 'not so much' water below our keels we decided that perhaps it was time to move. Our slightly awkward position was due to a mix of wind and tide overnight, not the general flow of the area as there was plenty under the keels for tidal flow. We moved back to Paradise Point near our last anchorage and pulled the initial 30 meters back to 22 so we could avoid a similar situation. At late morning there were still some showers and we were chafing to get off boat but although I would have loved a good walk the priority was lunch and a food shop – the larder was (almost) bare. Donned up in our wet weather gear we headed to shore – overkill as the showers abated to a hot and sticky afternoon but the Gore-Tex's were not yet fixed and our light rain jackets have issues with their zips and either need throwing out or a wiz with a sewing machine to fix.

26th February 2020. We had put the covers on the paddle boards yesterday as I have been under instructions to spend the time walking in my new orthotics and not to do any padding until my back is assessed. So this morning we were aiming at a good walk rather than a good paddle even though we were back at Paradise Point. We

had another parcel waiting for us at Labrador and we thought we'd try and walk there and back but given we hadn't been off boat for a decent walk for a few days were keeping our options open. It was already hot at 0800 when we got to shore and started heading south. We made the approximately 6.5 kilometres in around 1.5 hours – not as quick as your average walker but we were not used to the distance and it was hot. More practice will see greater distances in shorter time. We did have a couple of stops for me to adjust my shoes, the new orthotics tiring my feet a little, but there were no great issues. After picking up what was Andrew's new camp mat we spent the next couple of hours around Harbour Town, revisiting MacPac, Kathmandu and North Face because you never know what you are going to find; being outlet stores the stock on site can change. After a successful shop we decided we would try and walk back to Paradise Point again, realising we are not track fit we returned the way we came -along the bus route just in case. We were back at boat mid afternoon.

27th February 2020. It had briefly crossed my mind this morning that on the whole February had been an uneventful month.....I now realise you need to be careful what you wish for. Ideally, aspirationally I would have liked another walk today but the forecast was for 80 pc chance of rain with storms due late morning. Andrew is notoriously slow in getting motivated if I don't give him enough notice so the walk didn't eventuate. But the storms did. We watched the sky to the north and south of us change and the rain radar on bom.gov.au was not too innocuous....but the atmosphere has a habit of being unpredictable and at around 1130 the rain came down. And boy did it pour. This was okay – and not that unexpected. What was unexpected though was our position. Shore was getting decidedly close and we were on a dropping tide. Thunder and lightening had started up and Thor was performing with gusto. Light and noise was in close unison and clearly the storm centre was quite close. Not the time to be moving boat! But...if we didn't we were going to end up stuck on shore. So in the driving rain with lights flashing and thunder

27th February: AM27th February: Middle of the day27th February: PM

clapping we started to raise the anchor. Of course it is my job out the front so I was donned with the Musto Jacket, which was soaked by the time I came in.

The issue? Exactly the same as it had been some weeks ago – the chain having got wrapped around the anchor and the anchor came up horizontal!!! Last time Andrew struggled to unravel this we were in the Broadwater proper with clear skies. This time we were in limited space, driving rain, and a fogging helm station. I suppose having dealt with this before helped as Andrew managed to unravel the mess (with the help of a short line and the spinnaker halyard) in

a short period of time and we were ready to set again. We moved south, a bit, closer to the public jetty as we have had less issues with our anchoring here. It was still raining when all was settled but the storm had essentially passed and we settled down to a late lunch and a quiet afternoon.

28th February 2020. I finally got to see the chiropractor - and in the main the diagnosis was surprisingly good. Any issues were muscular. Some of the really tight spots were new orthotic related and these were eased out. The verdict was to see how I went, which was good, but with strict instructions to wear the orthotics in for the next couple of weeks only – no paddling, which wasn't so good. So accepting the advice we headed off for a long walk... Andrew has calculated that the distance from Paradise Point to the Nerang Bridge at Southport is around 11 kilometres, the majority of this is along the Broadwater Parklands and quite a pleasant walk, but we didn't quite get there. I am still getting used to the orthotics and whilst the left foot was having no issues, the right foot was working out how to adjust to the feeling of the orthotic edge on the inside of the big toe and then I assume leaning outward to counteract this. On the previous walks to and from Harbour Town I had been able to walk this out. Not this time. By the time we got to Catalina Café (adjacent the anchorage north of the Southport Australia Fair jetty) I had quite a sore foot. We had



an indulgent lunch here (there goes the budget for the next few days) before heading through Australia Fair and catching the bus home.

29th February. The odd day in the year and a quiet non-descript day on Sengo More coat was glued, and we discovered two of our gas bottles were empty! And close to final lists were made for our trip later in the year, corona virus dependent as long as we don't get a travel ban. The highlight was catching up with **Free Spirit** for a couple of hours on shore at Paradise Point.

