

# Aboard Sengo

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March 2020

## Coombabah Lakelands Conservation Area

Finding local bushland to  
escape to...

13

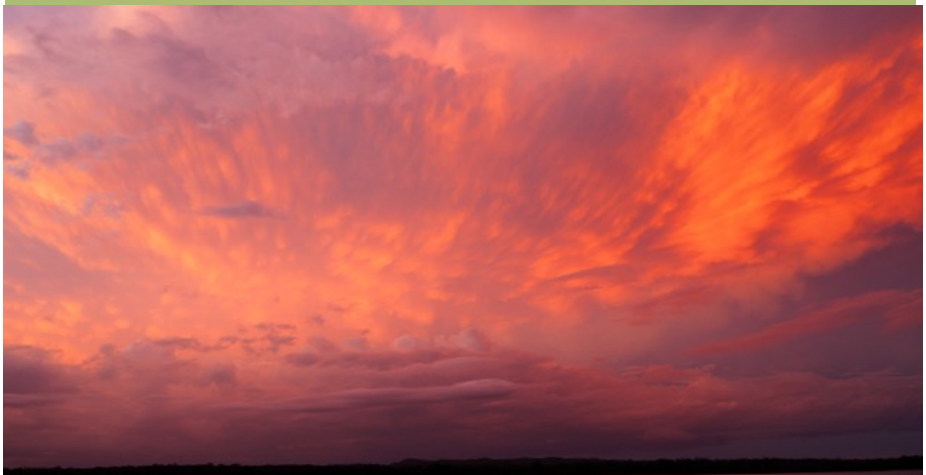
## A peck on the cheek

We are not supposed to be  
getting this close!

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## In Isolation...mostly



Sunset: Tiger Mullet Channel

Continued on page 2

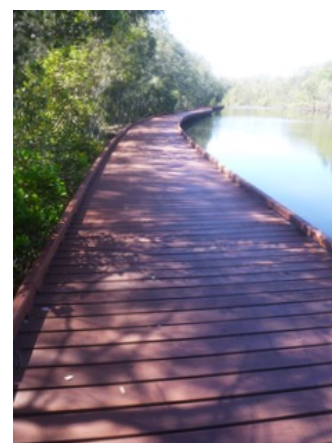
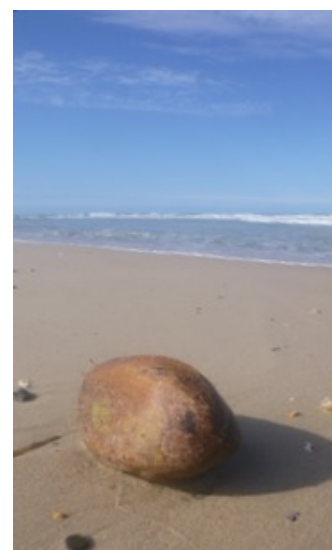


**Self Isolation:** A catch-cry to most of those suffering through corona Covid-19 virus; An instruction to those who have been tested until results come in; An instruction for entrants to some countries as they arrive and before they move around; and the normal state of affairs for yachties hiding from strong winds! Surviving a lockdown in official pandemic conditions is, provided you have enough food, not a great stretch for normal cruisers (although it might be a bit of a stretch for the party animals – we know a few). It should be easy using common sense; but then common sense sometimes gets left behind with herd panic: we saw the reported rush on toilet paper first hand in Coles in Runaway Bay but noted at the time the locals at Paradise Point had been a bit more restrained. However, after a couple of weeks, the toilet paper shelf at

the Paradise Point Food Works was also bare. We hadn't stocked up – we still had, hopefully, a few week's supply as the specs for our toilets recommend the use of 3 to 6 sheets only so you don't clog the system up... Landlubbers would do good to change their excessive habits – or find another way...perhaps we should all look at alternatives – we'd probably save a few forests!

It is officially Autumn; still blowing and still raining although the rainfall in March wasn't quite as much as February....none-the-less we spent the best part of the first two weeks hiding in Tiger Mullet Channel and discouraging hire boats from anchoring in our crossing circle.

With restrictions for social distancing ramping up we are quite glad we are used to this lifestyle and not too fussed, as long as we can get food when we need it; endeavoring to go into the shops as few times as possible and noting how comical it is when one person stops along a supermarket aisle, those behind them stop as well to ensure the distance is kept, or turn around and chose a different route to their required groceries. We did get off boat a couple of times to go walking, exercise taken when it could be as it is vital for our individual health. Of course, all this isolation practice became crashing down on the morning of the 27<sup>th</sup> March. Limping into 'port' without an anchor was necessary but meant we were much closer to people – a good thing for our social wellbeing (distances to chat (which we did a lot of over a couple of days) with at least the required 1.5m) but a whole new experience in washing and sanitising communal facilities (and avoiding those who were coughing)!



1<sup>st</sup> March 2020 was a usual day on boat; a bit of reading and a bit of cleaning.

2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020

Let me tell you a story....

But first a bit of background. My husband and I are transient and we have no permanent place of residence. Therefore we have no fixed address. The only official address that we can call our own is a post office box on the rural fringe of Melbourne which we get cleared every three months or so, the contents of which we get sent to the closest Australia Post Office to our anchorage when we know we are going to be around for a while. (Addresses on our licences etc are my parents and that is because for a licence you need a physical address).

Recently, due to tragic circumstances, we have been sort of stuck on the Gold Coast and we are now trying to sort out our lives before moving on. This involves the purchase of a few varied items. Getting items to us has been an interesting adventure as Australia Post Offices don't normally take couriers and we are now just finding out about Parcel Post, an official subscription service (by the sender). It has become habit to, if using a telephone to order items, ask for an Australia Post option or to send the items to an appropriate Parcel Post location. Of course, this only works if the sender has an account with Parcel Post (and the one we have been using recently is a 13 kilometre round trip walk away!).

I recently ordered two items from Print2Metal. I had been recommended to them by a fellow yachtie and told they were very efficient. Whilst this wont be our final order (this order is photos of our dearly departed fur babies – one just in January) we had been hanging around the Paradise Point area until we got them ordered so we had something to hang on the wall. True to reputation shortly after I made the order I got notification they were on their way...via courier... AND I HAD A MINOR PANIC ATTACK.

Admittedly I hadn't been looking to see how the company was going to send the finished product (it

was an emotional business choosing these photos so my focus was elsewhere), but I had given the address as the Paradise Point Post Office and unless I obviously see a company is sending by courier, or now that I know, has a Parcel Post option, I assume the goods will be sent by Australia Post. Perhaps that is naïve. I went into mitigation mode, rang the Post Office, grovelled until I couldn't get any lower on the ground (of course the woman on the other end of the phone couldn't see that but I hoped it was obvious in my voice) and asked her if she'd accept the parcel just this once. I told her I knew that Aus Post didn't normally accept couriers and had I known I would have arranged an alternate method of delivery. She was very reluctant, and grizzled that she would have to brief two different teams as there were different people working that day and the next.... Humbled, I was very grateful.

HOWEVER the courier never went to Aus Post because if they had I wouldn't have gone through yesterday's experience. On Friday I got notification on my phone that the courier hadn't been able to deliver the package (which we know is rubbish as I'd cleared it) and I needed to ring the depot. I discovered there was no option

of delivering to Parcel Post, because apparently although I had seen their vans come out of the National Storage location that we've been picking up from, it was because they were picking up from customers based there and not dropping off for the company I was dealing with. The closest alternative, the lass on the other end of the line could offer me, was the Coombabah IGA. I told her I would investigate and get back to her, which I did within a short time.

So yesterday afternoon we toddle off for a walk (over several kilometres!) in a direction we'd not taken before and despite the mosquitos had a lovely stroll through the suburbs and along the waterway. We got to the IGA and I expected a simple exchange of showing my drivers' licence for the parcel.

Instead I got hesitation, a phone call to someone else, the comment of 'I've got this Trish person here,' and a very rude note...see below. It was not the experience I was expecting. The Parcel Pont at National Storage has been wonderfully welcoming – this experience however tainted the day and instead of enjoying the rest of the walk and thinking about how I was going to arrange the prints on the wall, I was stewing over the rough treatment.

Can I suggest that

a)Print2Metal find a courier that can actually deliver to the address given on the label,

and

b)Fastaway couriers stop using IGA Coombabah – it wasn't the fault of the young lass who served me– it was her management – it was highly rude and confronting.....Note the bit about address – I don't have one – that is the **WHOLE POINT!!!**

Wording from the IGA:

ATTN TRISH EBERT

Please do NOT use the IGA address. Due to IGA staff not knowing the contents of the package this is a safety issue.

Please use YOUR address, if the package is unable to be delivered there, it will be brought here.

The package needs to YOUR FULLNAME & ADDRESS as per your licence.

In future we are unable to accept parcels that re addressed to our shop in care of you.

Thanks

Management

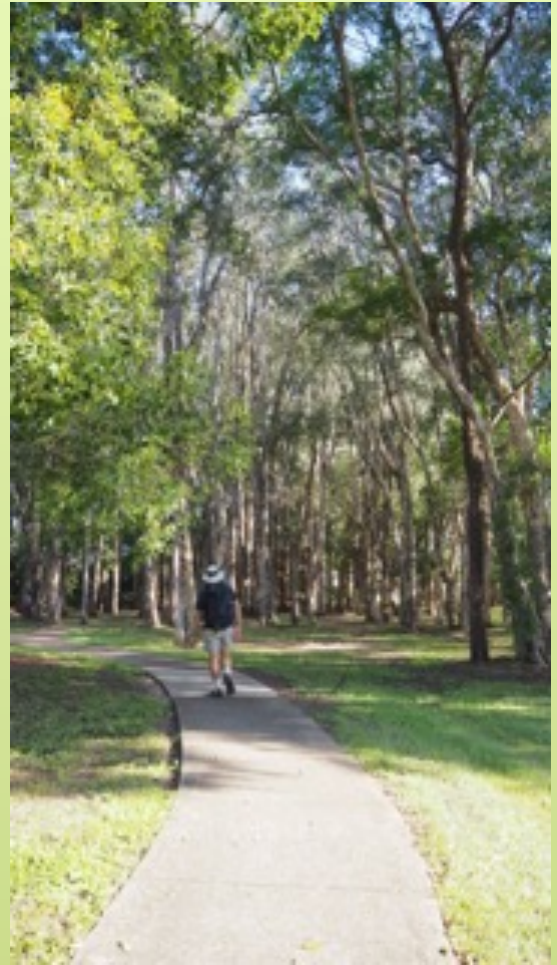
I hope both of your companies resolve this issue. I would think you would both want happy customers.....

(Note to Print2 Metal. I will probably be ordering more prints (where I will ring up first and make other delivery arrangements) but one of these two picked up yesterday has a scratch in it – please see attachments)

Kind regards

Trish Ebert

Note: Print2Metal responded almost immediately to this email. I have not heard a word from the customer service division of Fastaway Couriers!



The walk to Coombabah before the IGA incident was mosquito riddled but pleasant.



3<sup>rd</sup> March 2020. It was a lovely hot, sunny and calm day. I got ready for the water maker contractor by getting all the goods of the front port locker onto the deck – only to discover that I'd got the date wrong (Andrew had it right in his Calendar but I'd convinced him he was mistaken) and the contractor wasn't due until tomorrow. This was a pity as the weather conditions were predicted to change for the worse.

4<sup>th</sup> March 2020. As predicted, this morning's conditions weren't ideal for works in the front locker; it was windy, threatening rain, and we were getting to be on a lee shore. But having put the contractor off for some time, we thought we'd suffer through the 'uncomfortableness' of the situation and get the job finished. But, the contractor called in sick, his boss rang us to apologise and I was grumbly because had we known this we could have moved yesterday in much more conducive conditions. We picked up the anchor and moved to Crab Island.

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## Golden Shorts

5<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Weather predictions for the day were fair. Weather predictions for the next week were rainy, and then windy – from both directions. Taking the opportunity to get some exercise before we were likely to be confined to boat, after a quick run to the Runaway Bay Marina for a couple of jerry's of unleaded and a gas bottle exchange, we headed off to the Runaway Bay shopping Centre. We headed south on this hoof; my idea had been just to head out to the road that goes to the Bayview Harbour Marina to have a look and then hoof it back again... but Andrew had other ideas.

After walking along the waters edge at the Bayview Marina we headed out on the break wall for a better view. We could see the buildings of Southport to the south from here but we could also see Sengo to the north. We weren't alone: on the break wall were also a couple of sporty lads from Canberra. It seems there was a Masters Rugby Tournament on at the ovals on Lae Drive opposite the Runaway Bay shopping Centre. We had a good

chat and a chuckle when the lads told us they were going to be in pink jerseys – not a very 'blokey' colour! We'd seen quite a few people walking around with tops matching those of a group at the café near the tinnie tie up point, so we now guessed they were here for the rugby as well.

We turned south after our planned destination back down towards Labrador and saw other groups of gentlemen in matching tops – one group of 6 in white, and another group of 4 in yellow.

Masters Rugby is for over 35's, but apparently there are those in their 80's playing. The more frail individuals wear the 'golden shorts' – meaning essentially they are 'not to be tackled'. Some take the tournaments seriously and commandeer ex professional rugby league payers into the teams, for others it is not so serious as ascertained by a group we met on Broadwater Road at Labrador Park as we headed inland toward Harbour Town. Their team uniform included a lovely yellow and maroon striped top.... And... a black tulle tutu! They were big boys and their image brought a smile to our faces.

We'd been invited to come down and have a look by the first pair we'd met – their first game was at 1130 and they were going to be playing at least two rounds. We met the boys in the

tutus at 1120 but apparently their first game was at 1230 – they were, in their words, 'eating up big' before the big game. The event was to be held over three days and I wondered how the coming winds were going to affect the play. We never got to see the boys play. Due to our unexpected detour which ended in an 11 plus kilometre walk, and a few detours into shops along the way, we didn't get back to the Runaway Bay Centre until after 1400 and we had just enough energy to do a quick shop and head back to Sengo; around 6 hours after we originally got to shore. So much for a short walk! Walking across the road to watch the boys was going to be a bit too much of a stretch on our poor tired feet. So we didn't get to see the pink jerseys, the golden shorts, or, the players run around in their black tulle tutus!



Back to Green Island.

Whilst Saturday was due to have minimal winds, it was due to be stormy and we decided moving in those conditions was not ideal – and certainly not wanted after the storm experience of last week. The coming week was due to be wet and some of it seriously windy, from both directions, so instead of heading back into Paradise Point, or further south (which would probably afford adequate protection but Andrew's suggested locations were popular but untried by us and I'd rather try them out in less trying conditions) we moved back up to Tiger Mullet Channel, actually getting the genoa out for some wind assistance for a (very) short time on the way. Andrew has been itching to get going and get some sailing in but we keep ordering goods so we are tied to picking them up for another week or two. We followed Whalleys Channel to get to our anchorage and a power boat that came up behind us looked like it was in a hurry. You got the impression it thought we were going to pinch its spot, and sure enough it anchored below Green Island – the only boat there. We of course anchored where we did last time, to the west of the island and with plenty of swinging room and 45 plus meters of chain out. It was again late afternoon when we arrived. There were again grey clouds to the west and the sun was struggling to peak through. The wind had dropped – it had been blowing up to the 20's on the way up, and after a smattering of rain (just as we put the anchor down – why is it that I always seem to get the wet jobs?) the midgies were again out! Eventually they got too much and I ended up closing the house up so we wouldn't get eaten alive. It was a hot night



Late afternoon: Tiger Mullet Channel



Coles: Runaway Bay Centre

6<sup>th</sup> March 2020. 0600 No wind! But grey cloud and I could see some rain in the distance. But for a while it wasn't threatening and the storms were due 'late' morning. So, weather pending Andrew suggested a walk at Jumpinpin. Sometimes I am kitted up with everything and don't use anything...this time I left the backpack at home, grabbed the small waterproof camera and the old bridge camera and left everything else behind. Andrew grabbed his binoculars...and saw more than I did, because even though in theory I could zoom well with the old camera, the new batteries were caput – I had no extras....(they were supposedly new batteries but they'd been sitting in a packet for a couple of years)

We took two bites for a walk as the suggested spot where Andrew sat down on the first bite to have a rest (overlooking the ocean) was full of midgies –it is okay for him, I am the one who gets bitten the most. The walk on the point was brief as turning around we saw two patches of rain in the distance and the sun was about to get blocked out by grey clouds. We got back to boat just as a cold shower came down.



But that was it – there were no further showers (or the predicted storm) – which is a pity because I wanted to collect water.



*Looking west from Jumpinpin*

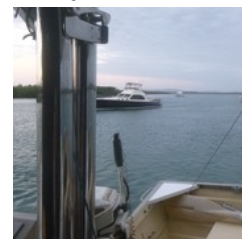


7<sup>th</sup> March 2020. We had been the only boat in the channel when we left for our Jumpinpin walk yesterday. When we returned there were four boats in the anchorage below the island, and by the time evening came around there were three more near us. Really!! You've got the whole channel and you plonk next to us. Admittedly one was the cat who'd been here last time we'd hunkered and he was back in 'his' spot. As the day progressed the anchorage south of the island emptied out and more and more boats came into our area. I yelled at one boat putting its anchor down that our anchor was in the middle of the channel (we were not) and that we had fifty meters out. I yelled this twice, swailing my arms in international distress mode to get her attention. Her only response was 'we've got 35 meters out it will be okay'. I wasn't overly happy with that and thought 'what an arrogant person'. Of course when the tide changed and we swung to the other side of the water way ...in 20 plus knots of wind, our hulls were getting mighty close. He now asks how much chain we've got out – he's got 35. We tell him again where our anchor was and how much chain we've got out



and that we'd explained this, and her response ... 'I didn't hear you'. I would have thought

you'd get that clarified if someone is waving a distress signal at you! They moved, in strong winds and eventually settled south of Green Island. Another couple of boats came in mid afternoon and settled to the east of us (one who started to play loud music at 2130!). Late afternoon a flybridge Palm Beach turned up and put down behind us, between us and the two existing power boats...that was probably a bit too close and overnight I woke up at low tide, on the other side of the waterway with the anchor behind us and the palm beach close adjacent! This was going to be interesting and I was almost expecting a bump in the night – we are circling around it! But I doubt the occupants were aware of the dangers.



8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020. For several days we ended up with only one neighbour and he was far enough away not to worry about. Most days it rained for some of the time, some days it rained for most of the time. We spent the hours going from one side of the channel to the other with the change of tide in close to our 90-meter diameter circle.



12<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Well. The theory was correct. Or almost! After a week of rain and wind and hunkering in Tiger Mullet Channel our larder was getting close to empty. Yesterday had held some blue sky and this morning we woke to minimal cloud and mostly blue sky. The wind was still up but the forecast for the past few days had indicated there 'might' be a period of 'slightly' less wind today. So being hopeful, we picked up the anchor and motored into the wind toward Paradise Point. The idea was a quick stop, a quick shop and to get back out of there. The weather had other ideas however. Grey in the sky increased as we headed south and so did the wind. And then the rain came down. There was no way we were going into Paradise Point in these conditions so the decision was made to anchor at Brown's Gutter until it cleared. But for a long time it didn't, the rain got more intense and more and more developed offshore to head over to us. The wind got up to mid 30's and it was, outside, downright miserable. We watched one individual in a large open 'tinnie' bounce airborne over the waves. I was actually asleep mid afternoon when the predicted 'lighter' winds should have been here. The wind dropped off around 1800 (for a very brief moment) – a bit too late to take the tinnie for a 4 nm return trip! Apart from the fact the shops would have been closed, it was still raining.

Dinner was a compromise. We still had some vegies left, but not many, and there was no fresh meat left. The good thing about this was that I'd managed a long overdue defrost of the fridge and freezer yesterday; the bad news was that now meals were going to get creative – there were a few tins of tuna floating around but until we restocked we were probably going to be going vegetarian (not necessarily a bad thing).

13<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Friday. This morning was reminiscent of yesterday morning, with blue skies and minimal cloud cover upon sunrise. The wind was better and we were anchored between the islands at Paradise Point (the normal anchorage was full at the south end and we are now very tentative about the north end) and had tinned across to the public jetty by 0750. After stops at the FoodWorks (where now I note the toilet paper had gone), the fruit shop, a visit to the post office, a stop at a café for a cuppa, and finally the butcher we were back on Sengo and leaving two hours later. We weren't desperate for fuel – we still had half tanks – but Andrew wanted to top up anyway. All well in theory but I wasn't that keen on coming into dock when it was blowing 23 knots – which is what it was blowing when we picked the anchor up. It



had been blowing around 11 knots when the anchor was dropped. However, the fuel dock at Runaway Bay Marina is protected in the main south east direction by an apartment building and the proprietor did see us coming so I had help tying up...we sidled up to the carpeted fenders with surprising ease. Getting off dock was a bit more of a challenge, Andrew pivoting on the front dock fender before reversing to get clear; then it was out into the main channel and the genoa was out with the engines on and off until we turned north east toward Jumpinpin. At this point the wind gusted to 24 and we furled the genoa in, motoring the rest of the way back to our Tiger Mullet Anchorage.

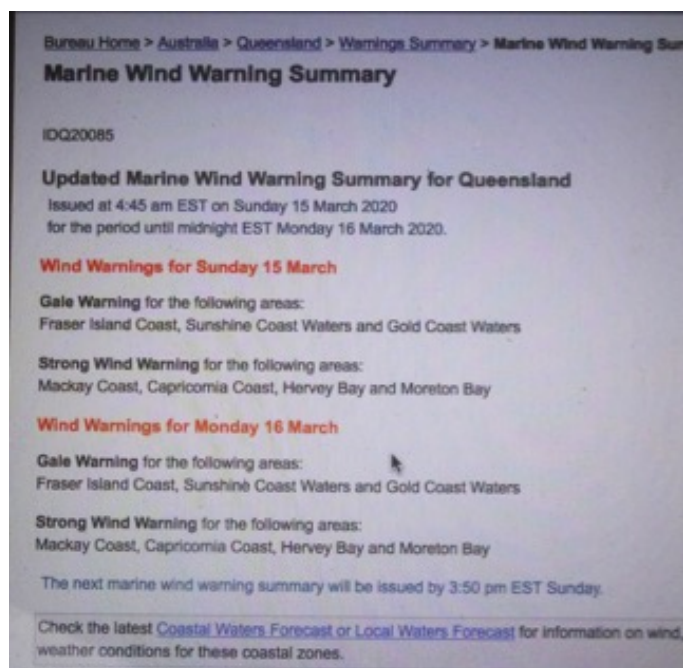
14<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Yesterday afternoon and today had seen a number of boats come, go and move (when we floated too close to them) in the area around Green Island. There was no rain today and I had a few windows open. It was a lazy day on boat, trips off not advisable as the predictions were for developing 20-25 knots – very early on the wind was minimal but we didn't know how long the good winds were going to last. Yesterday on the gauges we'd seen over 33 knots in the developing wind in the afternoon, today I didn't see over 23.



Gale warning!

15<sup>th</sup> March 2020. There was not a lot of wind this morning. We were on the northern side of the channel and once the wind started I suspected we were going to stay on the northern side, the expected winds were likely to be stronger than the tide.

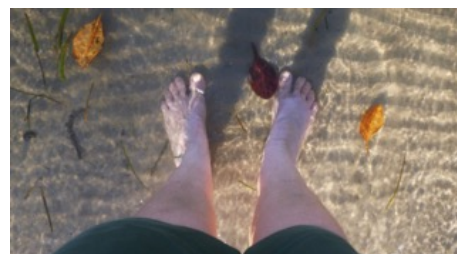
Another lazy day but I did manage to make a decision and order a quilt for hiking. Andrew had picked up his mass produced one and is yet to try it out. I had waited, umming and ahing over whether I wanted a quilt or a sleeping bag. I managed to find an Australian manufacturer where you can, within their parameters, choose the widths and fill (as temperature ratings) of your quilt.



16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Lazy days; reading, cleaning, computer research

18<sup>th</sup> March 2020. We moved to Paradise Point near the jetty between a houseboat and a small abandoned monohull. Our shopping experience was interesting; the Food Works had three individual rolls of toilet paper (with a note that only one per customer would be allowed) however when we got to the fruit and vegie shop – they had around two dozen rolls! Our visit to the butcher was only partially successful – there was no chicken; if we wanted any we would have to come back tomorrow morning.

19<sup>th</sup> March 2020. A precise time wasn't available for the chicken delivery and we were told the range of 0900 to 0930. We got to the butcher around 0850 and there was clearly two people already queuing. We left for a while ascertaining waiting outside was probably healthier than in an enclosed space. Then people started entering the shop and not coming out so I joined them to make sure I was somewhere in the queue. The delivery was a bit late and two customers gave up which put me back to third in line – the comment from the butcher was, when the chicken did turn up, 'it was just as well you waited – they've only supplied a third of what we requested'. After getting the meat back to boat we headed out to pick up some mail – from the Toll depot in Arundel! By the time we had also picked up deliveries from National Storage and returned to boat we had very tired and slightly sore feet – we had walked– 18.2 kilometres!



Cooling our feet after a long walk



20<sup>th</sup> March 2020. 'I'm insured'....was the comment I got from the driver of this boat. We had our anchor out 30 meters off to the port side and were liable to go over him if we turned. His only comment was to have a go at me for the amount of chain out (irrelevant) and that he 'was insured'. Of course if we all turned around he was probably likely to go over the small abandoned boat at the same time.... It is attitudes like that that make boating not so pleasant. He might be insured but that doesn't mean I want to damage our boat for his arrogance..... At 1500 the boat was around 40 meters away. By 1620 he had moved however and we let out a collective sigh of relief.

Of course it is Friday and coming into the weekend and having picked up the last known bit of our mail we could have moved..... except that we had made the appointment with the long awaited water maker guy for Monday and if we moved now we wouldn't get a spot back.



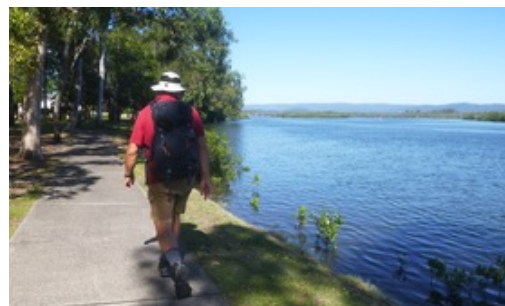
This boat doesn't look too close but he was within our swinging room!

## Coombabah Lakelands Conservation Area – Myola Section

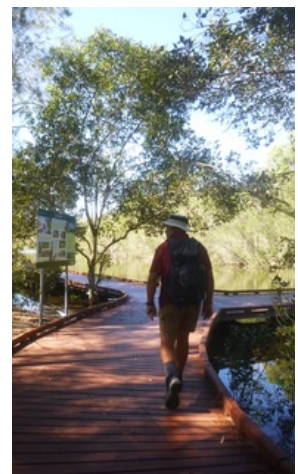
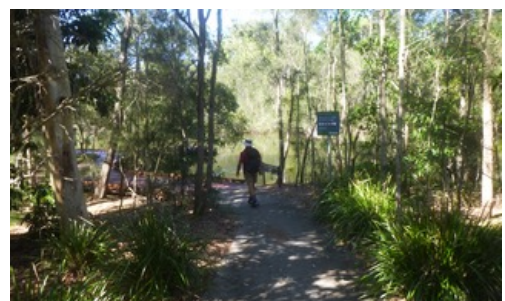
21<sup>st</sup> March 2020. The morning breeze seemed, for me, a bit too chilly for a paddle board, but I noticed the conditions didn't stop others in the anchorage paddling about. Instead, I managed to convince Andrew that a morning walk would be good, tempting him with a new location and pushing for an early start. It was 0825 when we started walking.... it however was a lot later than I expected when we got back (1300).

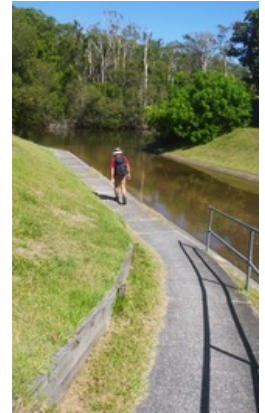
My plan had been to head back towards Coombabah, along what was last time, a mozzie infested waterfront, and then through the back blocks and around the channel along the northern section of the Boundary Track in the Coombabah Lakelands Conservation Area. Andrew in his diligence hadn't been able to see an obvious track on Google earth where I could see one on whereis.com so we decided to bisect the intended trail at the Myola car park, where I figured there would probably be some sort of interps board which hopefully would give us a map. There was an interps board, that did give us a map, but the official public track was in the opposite direction to where I'd intended to go. Being prudent we followed the public boardwalk south east and changed our initial destination to exit the Coombabah Conservation Lakelands Park way further south than I'd intended. What this did was essentially double the distance of our stroll.

The previous mozzie infested areas that we'd experienced on the 1st March, seemed fairly clear of the bitey beasts (probably something to do with more wind and less water lying around) but by the time we were walking along the channel they were nibbling us with a vengeance. There are houses along this waterway, some with complete verge access, and apparently the visitation of kangaroos, echidnas, and goannas is common, with water birds in abundance and koalas



Trying out the Capture Clip with the binoculars attachment





grunting in the bush land on the other side of the channel. There are those houses however that have 8 foot chain mail fence (ish – I didn't measure it) and no access to the parkland; I'd feel I was in a gaol if I couldn't get out into the area I was looking across; but Queensland is the land of the gated community and I suppose not letting people in also means not letting people out. Dry looking bush land was in some cases flanked by swamp gum stands; a great place for mozzies ....

Kangaroo's were obvious and at one stage we had to negotiate around two of them. Andrew, being the kangaroo whisperer, (he could always walk within a few meters of the 40 plus mob at our old land based property at Smiths Gully) got past without really disturbing them. They were a bit more cautious with me but settled down soon after we'd passed.

Essentially we followed the tracks that were mostly along part of the outer edge of the reserve - we hadn't budgeted time or energy for exploring the bush land within but there are several tracks available and I estimate at least two good walks worth for future exploring. Exiting out to Pine Ridge Road we walked back to Runaway Bay Centre, got some staples from Woollies (surprised to see a packet of brown rice so we grabbed it) and then hoofed back to Paradise Point. There were lots of people enjoying the day (social distancing ignored perhaps) and many boats had come in whilst we were away. After grizzling at the houseboat yesterday we came back to find a bigger one in a precarious spot, abandoned and a little closer for comfort. Fortunately at full stretch we didn't

touch but I was dubious about the usual mid tide dance. Perhaps I will be on houseboat watch overnight!



22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020. We tried for a paddleboard today but we only got around 20 minutes. Andrew, in his words, just 'didn't have his mojo'. Whether it was because his body was taking a break from our walking exercise or whether it was because we hadn't been on the boards for such a long time, it just wasn't going to work. So we headed back to boat to be on houseboat watch.



There is a boat stuck under the bridge!  
Fortunately it missed the nest!



### Getting his mojo

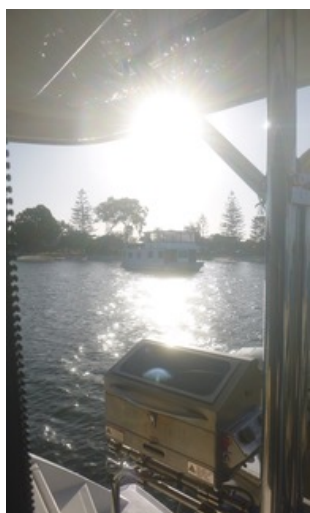
23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020. Because he'd had warning I did manage to get Andrew up and out early this morning and whilst it wasn't exactly warm - the sun was behind cloud - the conditions were quite pleasant for a paddleboard. The forecast was for rain and wind, the latter of which was due to come in strongly mid morning (which of course was when we were expecting a contractor!) Based on the cloud cover neither of us donned a hat nor sunglasses but we should have because when the sky cleared for part of our morning sojourn it was very bright and hot.

Having had Andrew call it quits the day before I didn't quite know what he was up to, however he managed a paddle down to the closest canal and after a rest on someone's dock we headed inland, this time heading under the Bayview Road Bridge (the one we walk over every time we head to Runaway Bay from here) and up into the canal estate. Two boats passed us, one each way, each going appropriately slow (I think they would get in trouble going fast here) and each very friendly. A mudlark had made its nest on the bent metal pole under the bridge and mother was at home. We turned

around after a long straight run (I note near a dock with the arrogant houseboat on it from the other day) and headed back to Sengo; the clouds had returned and the sky now decidedly greyer. The wind was up a bit as well. Because it was an incoming tide, our return canal journey was against the tide but we knew we'd have a tidal push once we got out into the open. The wind was enough to create enough wave to ensure our focus was on balance but we got back to boat safely without any mishaps. We'd left at 0720 and returned at 0830, just as the wind really picked up; Seaway recording gusts of 30 knots at this time. We had timed it perfectly.

The wind from this point didn't really die down until late afternoon which meant we were picking up our water maker contractor in the rough stuff; but despite a prediction that they'd get wet neither Andrew nor his passenger suffered the waves on the southern jaunt; we are close to the jetty so the trip was short.

Originally, despite a service, our recalcitrant water maker had been having conniptions at around an hour's worth of running time. There was some talk of a new motherboard to alleviate this, (and a back water flush problem) but over the past couple of months the running time seems to have sorted itself out on its own. The backwater flush was still a problem, and possibly had been since we got it installed. HRO weren't coming to the party in supplying a new motherboard (which we think has been faulty since its installation) so we have bypassed the system for an easier solution; a manual switch. With that situation sorted and a switch installed (and currently no more mail to wait for) we are finally free to leave the Gold Coast.....but.....with an ever changing pandemic situation with Covid-19 there is probably no place to go, and no place more convenient than here to get to food shops if we need them.



At full stretch this abandoned houseboat was about 10 meters behind us

24<sup>th</sup> March 2020. There wasn't a lot of rain forecast and the day only produced a couple of very light drizzles and one very short downpour (most precipitation was on the ocean side of Stradbroke Island). We took a quick trip to shore before lunch to stock up on food for a week or so, so we could move and get away from town. We didn't intend to go far, just away from lots of people. Social distancing was obvious for most people at the shops, except a young blonde woman in the butcher – I am glad it wasn't me she leaned over!

Apart from the very short stroll around the Paradise Point shops there was no exercise today, we spent the time catching up on news and enjoying the internet. Oh, and complaining to the car rental mob we've used over the past few months! They'd nominated us for some road toll bills that had come in, and as our listed address is two states away (in Victoria) at the address of a relative, the mail wasn't inspected. Only when an obvious demand from a collection agency arrived was the mail opened and bills found to be well overdue. Being generous our relative paid the bill and then rang and told us. Very generous. However, it turns out it wasn't our bill, the registration in question was of a truck, not the Hyundai Accent that we had, and now we have to work out how to get the money back. On the plus side, as the fine was not listed over \$1000 or subject to a court order Andrew won't get a black mark on his credit rating!!!! Hmmm!!!!

The tide can change your position in a matter of minutes; one minute we were almost attached to the houseboat; the next we were almost on top of this little motor cruiser. We were at full stretch with the bridle behind us but the motor cruiser decided to move anyway - and anchor on the safer southern side of the Ephraim Island Bridge

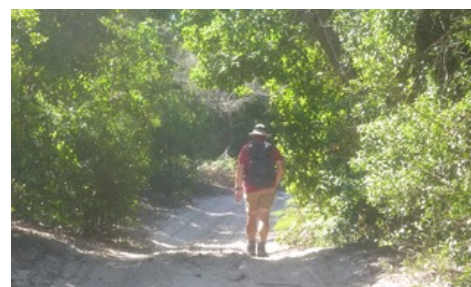




## A walk on the wild side

25<sup>th</sup> March 2020. It has been several years since we have stepped onto South Stradbroke Island and we very nearly didn't step on it today. The winds were light, the sun was out, and with the forecast for rain from tomorrow for several days the opportunity to go for a walk shouldn't be missed. But we'd been at Paradise Point for seven days and were due to shift, and really didn't want to spend anymore time than necessary less than 10 meters away from the abandoned square houseboat!

We didn't rush and moved around high tide across to anchor off north of the South Currigee Campground (adjacent the northern sites) late morning. We thought we'd wait until after lunch to go to shore, ensuring we were happy with our position post change of tide. Unfortunately this location is almost in the main channel, a 40-knot zone that is frequented by most boats traveling north along the Broadwater. We knew this. On other occasions we have anchored south of here, still adjacent the 40-knot zone but further away from the channel. We were prepared to ride a few bow waves but.....

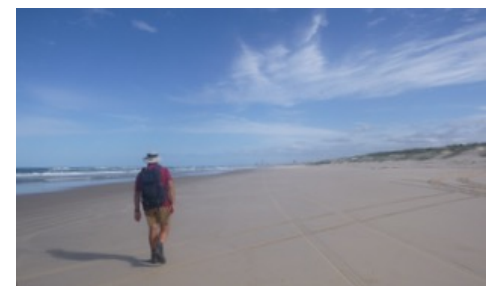
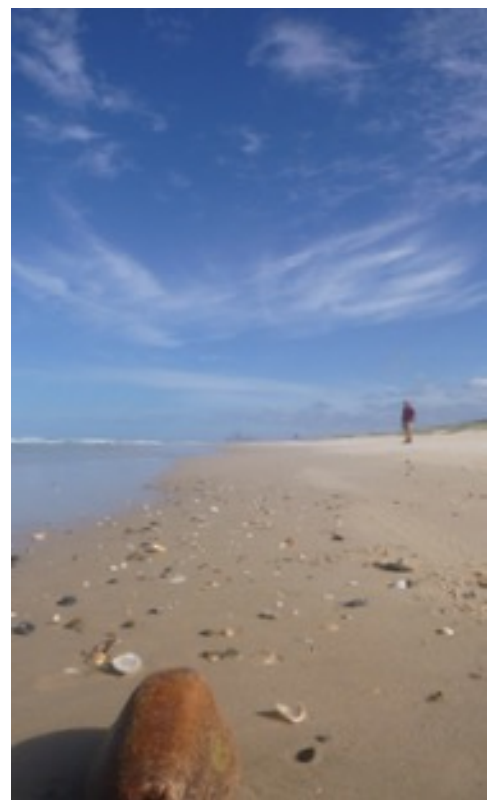


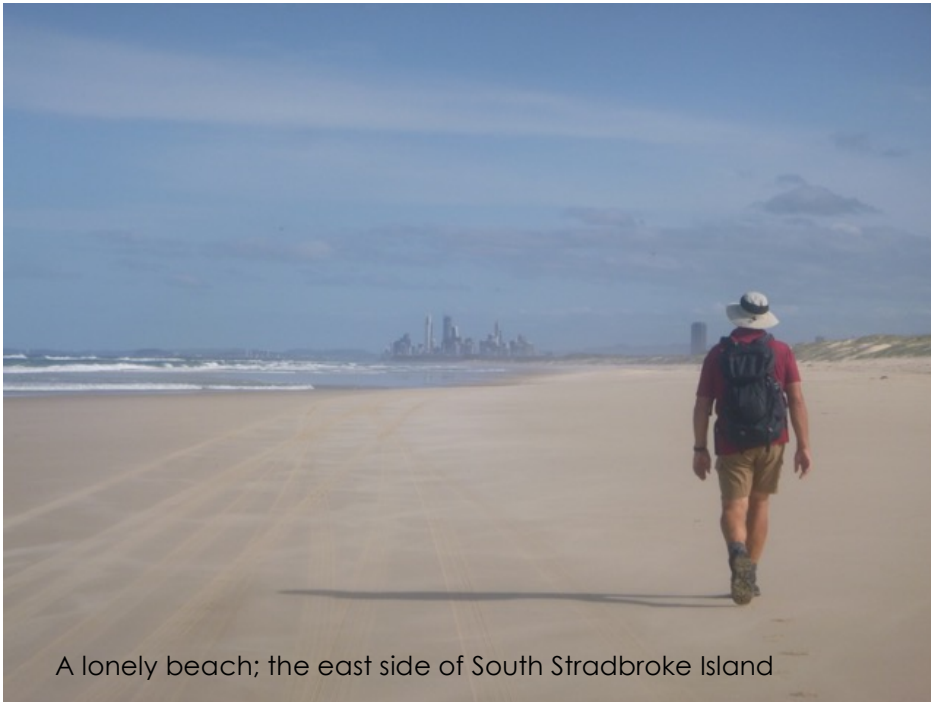


We had been warned that Riviera often do test runs up and down this area and we had seen a few boats (been passed by a few boats) on our journeys up to our hiding place in Tiger Mullet Channel and appropriately cursed them as we turned into the subsequent waves to ride out the storm. But nothing like this! This boat (see top of previous page) stormed past several times, at probably full tilt and we were left suffering the surf side on, as we were at anchor and angled with the tide. I was cooking pumpkin pieces in the pan where fortunately the stove top braces were on, but the bowl of muffin mix, along with a chopping board with a sharp knife and chopped up feta cheese, and all the other ingredients sitting on the bench slid towards the kitchen floor, once, twice, three times.....I lost count. The rolled up jigsaw puzzle fell off the window sill, Andrew was grabbing anything on his desk that was tipping, and the giraffes under our front window ended up on their noses. The skipper's decision was not to stay here – so after lunch we moved back to our tried and true Crab Island anchorage: so much for trying to get away from the mainland! But the conditions are quieter; fewer boats use this channel and technically between 0600 and 1200 every day the speed limit is supposed to be 6 knots.

Once settled here we did get off boat, landing the finnie on the same beach we'd intended to an hour or so earlier.

There was no plan to today's stroll and we headed north up the beach, heading inland to the track behind the dunes to miss a group of three tinnies having lunch, suspiciously looking like a gathering of people that is supposed to be banned. We stuck to the vehicle tracks, passing several houses and the depot before heading up the track that leads to the North Currie





A lonely beach; the east side of South Stradbroke Island

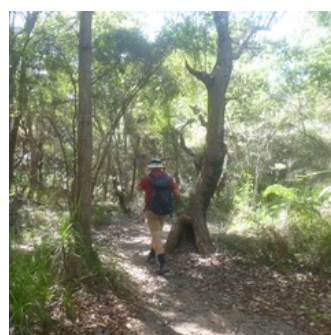


What was left after the departure of the occupants of three boats!



Beach access on the east side of the island. The beach was deserted. Walking south toward a distant Southport we returned to the depot and the Broadwater via the track to the South Currigee Beach and back to boat via the original track and along the sand.

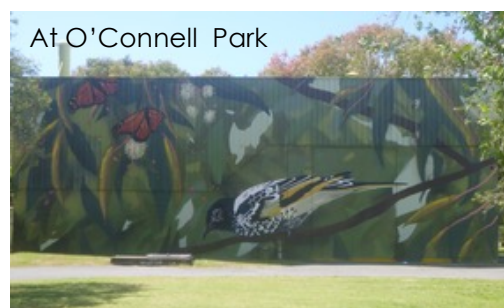
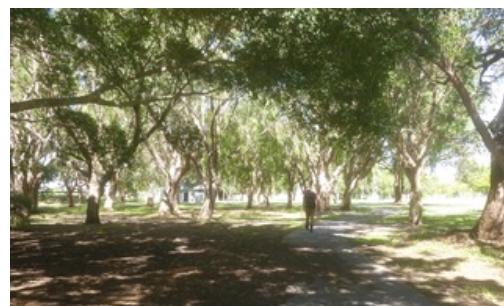
Birds seen; magpie, Brahminy kite, white bellied sea eagle. Birds heard; mangrove honeyeater, crow and lots of other little non-identified avians. Something scuttled in the undergrowth next to the track but we are unsure if it was avian, mammalian or reptilian. Several wallabies were also spotted.



## Bats and Butterflies; a walk around local parklands.

26<sup>th</sup> March 2020. At 0640 a pair of white-bellied sea eagles were clucking from the top of a tree on Crab Island. The usual squawk of the rainbow lorikeets provided the background tune and several swallows were sitting on our life-lines. I'd started a load of washing, wiped down the back deck (very dirty but not yet clean), checked the news and put the dishes away. The morning peak hour boat traffic had started although I am not sure anyone was obeying the 6-knot limit!

The forecast was for showers from late morning. In order to get some exercise I looked for a walking route we hadn't taken before and found an option that headed inland. We tied the tinnie up at the Runaway Bay Centre dock, walked up the canal and turned south down Morala Avenue towards the 'Len and Muriel Godlonton Reserve', a block full of swamp gum looking trees whose puddles by the footpath we noted only recently had finally dried up. On approach however there seemed to be works along the pavement and not knowing whether these were near the entrance path we diverted down an adjacent road instead, keeping our distance from the road workers. We finally found the other end of the pathway and walked back up towards Morala Avenue, noting the screaming of the flying foxes above us and almost having to swat butterflies out of the way, there were that many of them. From the western end of this reserve we took an almost connecting park and turned south through Runaway Bay Lyons Park and then headed back east along Coombabah Road, extending through O'Connell Park and back up the Bayview Road to our tinnie. The walk was under 5 kilometres but gave us some exercise. The loss of the day was half of my capture clip. Because the strap on my backpack is so thick the supplied screws are not quite long enough and they'd undone themselves to the point the front of the clip fell off when we were reloading the



At O'Connell Park



At O'Connell Park

tinnie back onto Sengo. It bounced on the back step and fell into the drink. I only managed to grab the back of the clip by chance, before it too would have gone overboard. I was very grateful my binoculars were not on the clip at the time!

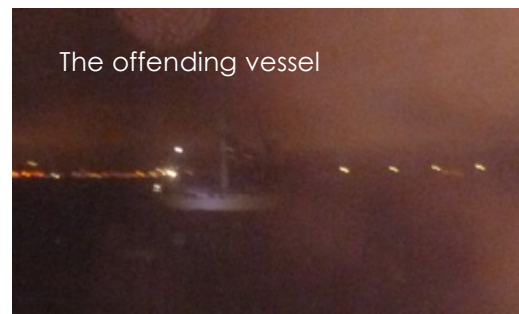
## Bending the rules....and other things.

27<sup>th</sup> March 2020. I usually don't have a problem dancing cheek to cheek, in fact, being a tactile person I love a good cuddle and close contact, with friends and strangers alike. However when that contact becomes a peck on the cheek, so to speak, and your lips are an anchor sticking out the pointing end of a monohull in 20 plus knots of wind in a lumpy wind against tide situation, I'd rather you kept your distance.

I had gone to bed a little early. Andrew came to bed around 2230 and all was well. Yes, we were dancing around a bit but we expect that, not only is this location a bit awkward in wind against tide, we knew the southerly wind in this situation was going to be uncomfortable (we have moved from here before because of this situation).

Earlier in the afternoon I had discouraged a monohull from anchoring off our port side. If our anchor had been out in front of us he probably would have been fine in normal situations, but our anchor was 40 meters angled off our port bow about where he looked like he was going to put his anchor. A yelled exchange was sarcastic, the bits I could hear of it (including why I had so much chain out and was I sure I 'didn't want to have the anchor in Brisbane') and he finally moved to behind us, perhaps ideally a little close but if we were all in a line he should be fine. Sometime later another scrappy looking boat came in, anchoring in front of us, this time off to the starboard side but he was nowhere near our anchor and again should be fine.

At around 0020 I woke up, heard the wind and asked Andrew if he had pulled the washing in, which was hanging on the lines out the back over the tinnie. This hadn't been done and I looked out the window to see the boat behind us at a less than ideal distance. I got up, battled the wind outside and rescued the hanging washing before any of it shot its pegs and blew away. In the mean time the monohull was getting closer and closer... and closer. We had discovered a few days ago that our horn isn't working so yelling at Andrew to get up, we put our instruments on to ascertain our position (we were halfway between our anchor and outer mark) and I went forward to pull out our fenders, not a comfortable job to do in the slightly rocky conditions as I had to juggle getting as many out as possible as quickly as



possible without them going overboard. As quickly as I could I lined them up down the port hull but I handed the last one to Andrew just that second too late and between the yelling match with the owner of the other boat he didn't quite get it between the anchor on the monohull's bow and our fibreglass side!

I was convinced the boat behind us was dragging....but the owner wasn't listening. See that – he pointed to his chain – that is taught. Yes, well it may be but that doesn't mean he wasn't dragging and the truth was he'd anchored too close. Catamarans and monohulls move differently – a fact not all skippers take note of! Of course technically he is under obligation to move, but apparently he couldn't, some excuse about having no engine – which of course was rubbish because he didn't anchor or move around this anchorage with his sails. But, when it comes to old single men on dilapidated boats with probably guaranteed no insurance you have to make what you can and take the initiative yourself. We turned the engines on (via the VSR's

because our engine batteries didn't start) and motored slowly away so I could pull in a few meters. Of course I had to pull the bridle in first and that was hard enough, because of the conditions to get Andrew to accurately turn where I needed him to. Once the bridle was up we pulled in first five, then ten, then another five meters in. That made 25 meters, we now only had 18 meters in the water, not really nearly enough for a boat this size in these conditions. We didn't put the bridle back because we knew trying to get it off for future adjustments would take up potentially precious time, so heaven knows what the chain was doing to our antifoul in this dance routine. And still the monohull kept coming!

We spent the next three hours on serious anchor watch; I spent a good chunk of it shining a torch at the offending boat so we knew where it was, Andrew spent the time in the helm station moving slightly back and forward to avoid the moving obstacle behind us. At around 0300 we had a small reprieve, the wind seemed to drop and conditions settled and I got around 30 minutes snooze. In the mean time of course the skipper of the other boat was not on deck all the time, coming up and down when he felt like it. Getting really close at some points and when we put our motors on slightly further away. Andrew suggested he would keep watch and I could catch up some sleep. At just before 0400 the wind picked up again, the boat was coming back, still heading our way (definitely dragging?) but we were now out of what would have been our circle – ie we didn't have enough chain out (as I suspected) in these conditions. We had no choice: it was time to pull the anchor up – still a monumental feat in the conditions, twisting and turning to get the anchor up with minimal damage to the boat. It struggled a bit and then..... bang. I was almost knocked off my feet, the anchor temporarily digging in with great gusto before releasing again to a strained pull in.

When I got the anchor up I found the culprit for the last little jolt – a crab pot hanging off the 'starboard tyne' – the thing must have been buried to give us such impact. Once I'd cleared with a boat hook – (bear in mind I was manipulating a long implement with very little swinging room in the dark and lumpy conditions) and extricated the boat hook from the crab pot as it started to pull the useful end towards the drink.....I realised it wasn't the tyne that was what had been caught, it was the point (which makes sense if you think about it) but the point was where the

starboard tyne should have been, the starboard tyne was clockwise to this and the port tyne near the front! In Andrew's words 'we have a pretzel on the end of our anchor chain.'

What do we do now? It is around 0400. It is close to pitch black (as clouds had come in) and it was now drizzling and we can't anchor (there is a spare Fortress in the front locker but we've never set it up). We spent the next two hours motoring slowly up and down the channel around the end of the Coomera River before it was light enough to head upstream and call The Boat Works with a cry for help.

We managed to secure an end dock (for this night only) so we could drop the tinnie and get the anchor off in order to take it to somewhere to get it straightened.

We dropped the anchor off to Watson Engineering and went back to boat to recuperate.

Our anchor is a 55 lb Manson Boss. It has been around Australia and suffered through some fairly harsh conditions. It has done us proud but we now had the opportunity to reassess. In all fairness, whilst it is heavier than the anchor that originally came with Sengo it is still a bit under specced. So after discussions and some advice from other cruisers we decided that, whilst we had the opportunity, we would upgrade to a heavier anchor.

28<sup>th</sup> March 2020. I never travel well after doing overnights. One or two nights really knocks me out. Andrew has similar problems but comes out of them slightly better. Whilst we don't like longer trips, by the time we've travelled for more than three nights on a run our bodies have got used to it and we recover much quicker.

Our little incident that got us up at 0020 was essentially, for all intents and purposes, given the time we were awake, considered an overnighter. Despite us both getting a small respite (me at 0300 and Andrew at around 1500) we ended up with around three or four hours sleep in around 40 hours and by this afternoon I was not coping.

There had been no option of a sleep in this morning. We were on an end berth and were allocated a pen for this evening. Usually a 'very stressful' event for me I have in the past couple of months settled my nerves a bit and now I would just call it 'stressful'. I want to thank the rope catchers B, V, and P, and M for her hand signals from the end of the adjacent arm around 0700 (oh and Mi for helping us off the other dock). Then it was breakfast and time to organise to try a new anchor. We borrowed a dingy (because ours was now facing the dock and we didn't want the hassle of moving the boat again) to help in this exercise. Plan A didn't fit (I note Leopard Catamarans have now changed their mould to fit anchors with roll bars), So Plan B is now on order.

Despite social distancing we chatted for longer with a few people today than we had for a long time – probably because we hadn't been near fellow boaties for some time – all at the appropriate 1.5 plus (sometimes closer to three) meters distance of course. We were lucky, there were limited individuals up our end of the marina so there was no inadvertent passing of sick individuals (I had heard someone have a terrible coughing fit in the old ensuite this morning so our aim is to avoid the 'old' end of the yard altogether).

By evening however the lack of sleep, despite a full overnight sleep last night, was catching up to me. I felt tired, sick and had a whopping neck ache, due mainly in part that I'd attempted a snooze in the front cockpit without an appropriate pillow.

29<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Half the day was a right off with my neck (a little electronic massager eventually did the trick) and the rest of the day was just mosing around. We hadn't had the brain power on Friday to secure a car for the weekend so we were kind of stuck on dock and didn't have much enthusiasm to do anything anyway. I did manage to pull Andrew out for a walk in the late afternoon (4.81 kilometers along Beattie Road and up and around the local recreation ovals at the sport centre) so we did get a bit of exercise. Upon returning through the gates we were delighted to catch up with M and C even though it was a car park discussion with each of us standing on the corner of a three meter square!

30<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Monday saw the arrival of the Plan B anchor. It was tested and fit in the appropriate orifice, but the expensive swivel that fitted the other anchor beautifully however needed a bit of work; the gap was just a smidge thin. So, with a borrowed car we took a trip up to the local engineering shop for adjustments to fix the swivel, pick up the now straightened anchor (which looked magnificent but we decided against keeping it as a spare because the only place to put it was under the cockpit table), made a trip to the Helensvale Transfer station to get rid of our recycling, dropped our old batteries off at Battery World, and restocked some food in Woolworths in Oxenford and Flanneries in Paradise Point. A bit

after 1600 we managed to borrow P's dingy again and with help from M off one of the big gin palaces that was docked with us on J arm, the anchor was finally installed. With the anchor fitted and the larder partially restocked we were now set to leave.

31st March 2020. Because of the new anchor's shape there is a bit of a wobbly gap in the anchor well when it is raised and locked off, so we started investigating chocks for long distance security of the shaft. The old anchor had this issue but because of the gap down the shaft we were able to manoeuvre ropes through from each side and securely tie them off. This anchor doesn't have the gap however and a different approach needs to be taken. The chandlery had nothing that could be used and we didn't have time to go to Bunnings, expecting to leave in the next little while. Andrew asked a Teak company if they had any offcuts of wood that he could use.- he was hoping for scrap but was asked to pay for the bit he did end up with. That essentially left us free to go...except that we passed the generator mob and Andrew stuck his head in to ask a question. This left us with an opportunity to potentially investigate an ongoing annoying issue the next morning. So it was back to the office to extend our stay and the afternoon was spent scrubbing the front cockpit cushions and half the top deck (we ran out of time to complete the rest).