

Aboard Sengo



Sengo on mooring in Gladstone Marina Harbour; with Mount Larcom in the background

Curtis Coast to the Gold Coast

Getting South for Summer



Impending thunderstorm: Tiger Mullet Channel

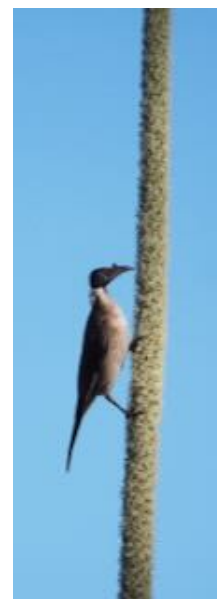
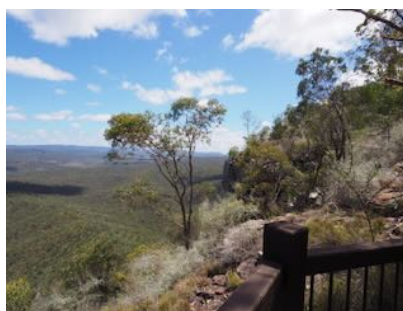
After a longer than expected break in Gladstone (we had booked a week on a mooring at the marina but extended it due to the southerly winds; filling the time in with some walking and car based exploring), we joined the late throng of boats moving south for Summer, and made our way from the 'Curtis Coast' in Central Queensland back down to the 'Gold Coast' in South East Queensland. Weather, as usual, played a part in our progress, and we found ourselves sitting out several days of strong winds, both at River Heads in the Great Sandy Straits in the middle of the trip, and at Tiger Mullet Channel, our usual hidey-hole north of the Gold Coast, at the end of the trip. Bad weather meant we just missed catching up with two boats in the Sandy Straits, but we did manage several other rendezvous with fellow yachties (and met an American movie location scout) during the month.

We were heading south for two reasons. A) we had planned the Festive Season main days would be around the Gold Coast and b) our insurance line for cyclones is currently around Hervey Bay north of the The Great Sandy Straits. Insurance is a topic we are going to have to really study early next year; most insurance companies seem to be either getting out of the Australian Market for people like us, or offer nothing in return for their premiums.

Whilst we had lost the 'comedy channel' from the Whitsunday Charter boat scheds there was still plenty to listen to on the radio. This included the usual opening and closing addresses from the VMR's and Coast Guards, as well as their conversations with passing boats. Inter-boat chat was also interesting although we could probably be accused of voyeurism if we took too much notice of these. What I was surprised at though was the 'Notice to Mariners' regarding the Whale Migration Season! What! Not only is the whale migration season normally listed from May to September, it was read out as such. There were no extra ordinary circumstances listed. So why the announcement? These announcements were mainly out of Mooloolaba. Closer to the Gold Coast the radio chatter was ship movements, VMR rescues and log ons.

Whilst I had hoped to spend time at Tangalooma on the way down, the weather dictated that wasn't going to happen; it looks like I can finally put the snorkelling gear away for this season.

On boat time was taken up as usual; recreational reading and boat jobs - I was disappointed I didn't get more polishing done but at least I made a start. And, I finally managed to finish off two tasks left over from our Canadian trip - sending some photos to two German tourists we had met whilst over there. My delay meant it was harder to contact them but I persisted. One less unfinished task rattling around in the back of my mind....now for the next exciting task: tax....hopefully I can get that sorted by the end of the year.



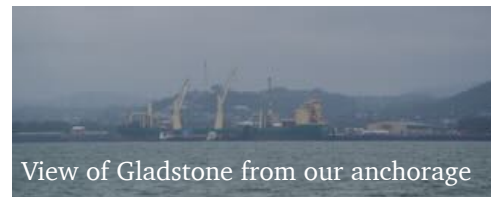
North of Gladstone

1st November 2022, It was supposed to be windy. And rainy. In the end it was really neither. But it was grey! The highest wind speed we saw on the gauges was around the high teens. There was only one really good rain shower and I managed to collect a bucket full of water. With it I washed the top of the boat - spending two hours on my hands and knees. The hope was the next really good rain shower would rinse it off - it didn't happen!

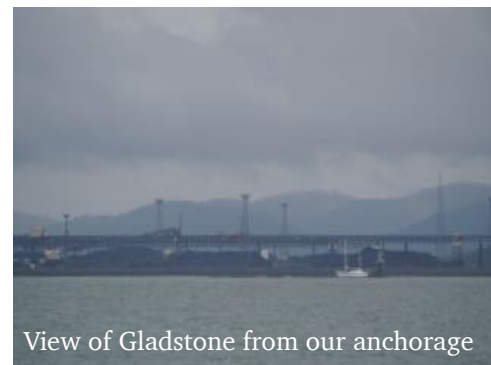
The majority of the rest of the day was spent on New Zealand planning. I had hoped to reconfigure the second section of our trip but ended up finding a few issues with the first section. Given the dates and storm damage it looks like we will be doing a bit more road walking than expected. But we are used to that - we walked the Tasmanian Trail!. Meals were easy today - two lots of left overs. Other activities included a bit of newsletter and washing musty smelling clothing.



View of Gladstone from our anchorage



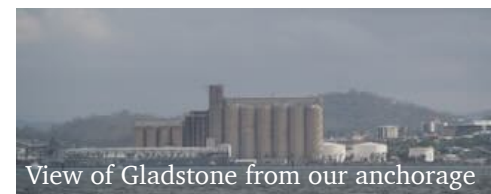
View of Gladstone from our anchorage



View of Gladstone from our anchorage



View of Gladstone from our anchorage



View of Gladstone from our anchorage

Gladstone Harbour Marina

2nd November 2022. I woke up at 0130 to what seemed like a howling wind. Putting the instruments on I discovered we were facing west. In strongish winds - 26 knots! These were probably the winds we were supposed to get yesterday, but they were from the wrong direction!

There was lightening in the sky to the east. When I checked the rain radar there was a cigar shaped roll of rain to the east of us - I don't know know if it had formed just after us or whether we were wet - I wasn't going outside to find out. We hadn't moved but we now had a boat in line with our anchor!

We picked the anchor up when it got light. The wind was still west. Fortunately the mono was not on top of our anchor - but he wasn't far from it and Andrew was getting angsty as I gave him the anchor retrieving directions. After making our way through the deeper water across the shipping channel, we picked up the only free mooring at Gladstone Marina. It was 0750.

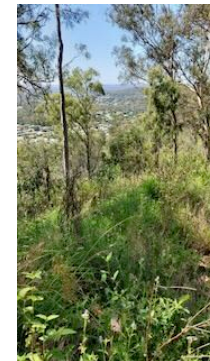
After breakfast we went to shore, checked in, got picked up by a car hire mob and organised to hire a car for a week. Technically we only had to restock and perhaps do a big wash of the couch covers but according to wind predictions we wouldn't be sailing south for another week anyway, and as we needed track practice decided staying here would present a good opportunity to do some walking.

It was then back to **Anapa** for a catch up cuppa, and then back out for a health food shop. Lunch was a cafe near Woolworths Village (adequate but not entirely satisfying) and then the botanic gardens.

We were back on boat mid afternoon and managed a small yoga session in the evening.

Toodoon Botanic Gardens (and surrounds)

We have attempted to visit the Toondoon Botanic Gardens on a previous trip to Gladstone but the noise of the construction work at the time put us off. This time there was a bit of activity, packing up from the festival that had been on over the past the weekend, but apart from that all was quiet. For a longer walk I had decided we would do the 5.3 kilometre option In AllTrails around the Gardens, but water over the path put a stop to that. So we did a shorter loop that took in Mount Biondello instead. It wasn't a hard walk, although there was a little bit of 'up.' We had skirted around most of the 'garden displays' at the start of the walk but we well and truly walked through the main rainforest part of the gardens on the way back. I would have loved to have explored these areas further but Andrew had short sleeves on and was being attacked by mosquitos so we didn't linger.





This pretty visitor was on the back cockpit covers. I left it there

3rd November 2022. I was up early - Andrew at around 0645. I spent the early morning on the newsletter and stripping the couch cushions in prep for a washing run. And after breakfast, whilst Andrew was off helping another boat, I headed to the laundry. There are five washing machines and four dryers. None were being used when I arrived and to get a good wash for all the covers I commandeered three of the washers. By the time the wash run had finished and the items were ready for the dryer, it was a full laundry with people waiting to use the facilities. I used three dryers as well, although I managed to mix up payment and only two went to plan. I had headed out for a cuppa on **Anapa** whilst the dryers were running and only discovered the mistake when I returned to the laundry; one lot of my drying now had 20 minutes, not 5 minutes, to run, as others had transferred my wet washing into the correct machine when they noticed the issue. Whilst it is fairly obvious which washing machine is which at the pay station, you have to concentrate on the payment for the dryers - there are two number 1's and two number 2's.

The morning drive was a comedy of errors. We were helping another boat to try to get a parcel sent to Brisbane. Aus Post wouldn't take it (it was too long), Fed Ex wouldn't take it (because we didn't have an account) and in the end a local mob took it, but we think it was sent via TNT anyway. We had lunch at the sailing club with **Anapa**. Back at boat it was more New Zealand logistics and putting the now dry couch covers back on.



A stroll around Tannum Sands

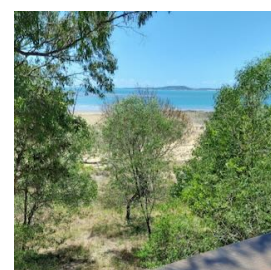
4th November 2022. I could have got the most fabulous close up photos of a koel today, as well as a pair of blue winged kookaburras, a laughing kookaburra and a collared kingfisher. I had seriously looked at my good camera several times this morning before we left the boat, reminding myself that last time we walked in the area we were heading to today that I had also missed out on some classic close up bird shots. However, I left the camera at home and missed the shots.

This morning's first task however was another washing run of couch covers. As per yesterday I was the first one in the laundry, and today, almost the only one in the laundry. I even pressed the correct button for the dryer! Andrew had come with me and we filled in time walking the docks noting a couple of boats we had met at various points over the past 8 years; a few of which won't remember us. Back at boat we had a latish breakfast and then headed off for a walk.

Today was a warm up. In the next few days we have two big walks planned - one is twelve kilometres of 'UP' so we thought getting a bit of a warm up would be prudent. So going to my AllTrails App I chose the loop around Tannum Sands. We have done small sections of this loop before, along the Boyne River and from the Esplanade to Canoe Point picnic area, but the loop made the trek just under seven kilometres according to the track notes. We took two hours and ten minutes to complete the circuit but we did stop for a break and an apple, and we did stop to pat a dachshund.

There were a few scurrying lizards off to the side of the trail, several bush birds flitting around (most of which weren't seen clearly), a black-faced cuckoo shrike who did a fly by within arms reach, a pair of peaceful doves, an adult and juvenile magpie, along with the kookaburras, kingfishers and koel mentioned earlier. I was looking for the bats that were so prevalent along the river last time, but there were none, and I did find the interps board that suggested the bats were seasonal. Surprisingly, as some of this walk is along mangroves, there were no mozzies and I only saw two midgies.

We did this walk over the middle of the day but it wasn't too exposed as there is a fair bit of patchy shade along the path.



Mount Archer

5th November 2022. We have been to the top of Mount Archer several times before - but never by foot.

Starting at the edge of an outer suburb of Rockhampton, the Zamia Walk offers a different perspective of the mountain as you climb from the foothills to the 'summit'. There are no distant views until you get past the 9 kilometre mark, and this is also where the track gets quite a bit steeper, with concrete formed stairs a regular feature for the last couple of kilometres. There are stairs elsewhere on the track as well, but not as many, 97 for the last kilometre to Moogul, about halfway along the track, and 39 immediately after this, with occasional steps elsewhere.

Vegetation ranged from open dry forest (with various mid stories including Kapok), to dry darkish rainforest, to open forest with either dominant xanthorrhoea or cycad understory (or a mixture of both). The first part of the Walk is through a mountain bike park and we saw a few bikes, and walkers, as we headed up 'the hill.' We also saw two bikes as we headed down, all four of us converging at one spot (each bike was going the opposite direction to the other) late in the evening, a few minutes before 1800 - the odds of that must be astronomically low.

No animals were noted. A few birds were heard calling; koel, fruit dove, lorikeets- and a few seen; peaceful dove, brush turkey, sulphur crested cockatoo, magpie, noisy miner.

We started the walk at 0810. We finished the walk at 1810. The AllTrails app suggests an average of 7 hours and 41 minutes. I knew we would take a bit longer but wasn't expecting us to take 10 hours! However that time included a short stop at our second creek crossing, a stop for first lunch at Sleipners Viewpoint, half an hour stop up the top (on the same height as the 'Summit' sign but technically a few meters below the carpark, toilets and tower), and a couple of short stops on the way back. The AllTrails App lists the distance of its track as 24.3 kilometres. It would be slightly further if you started at the car park at First Turkey Trail Head. The signs up the top give a distance to the Trail Head, yet an old sign on a lower track gives a distance to Sunset Drive which is where we started. I enjoyed most of this walk, Andrew started getting tired about kilometre 18, which isn't bad as his comfortable limit is usually 20 and we are out of long and hard track practice.

Of course when we got back to the car it was getting dark. When we got back to Gladstone it was well and truly night (1.5 hour drive). We had been warned that there had been whitecaps inside the marina during the day - it had been windy at Mount Archer as well. We headed back to Sengo after having a nice cleansing shower. Fortunately we saw no whitecaps (It was dark) but the wind gauges indicated 13 to 17 knots when we got back to boat.

Weather - We had chosen to do this walk today and not yesterday because predictions were for a cloudier day with perhaps a smidge of rain. For a majority of the day we did get a mottled grey sky above us, which helped greatly with the heat. We got around four drops of rain. bom.gov.au was expecting Rockhampton to have around 28 degrees which was a couple of degrees higher than windy.com's predictions. Yes, it was 'warm' but I wouldn't have wanted a cloud-free day.





6th November 2022 Despite going to bed at around 2100 I was surprised, given yesterdays exercise, that I still woke up, and got up around 0530. The sun of course was up and bright. There was not a cloud in the sky. My feet still felt tired, my shoulders a little grumpy, but my legs were surprisingly good, although I had given them a good stretch before bed. I should have worked on my shoulders as well.

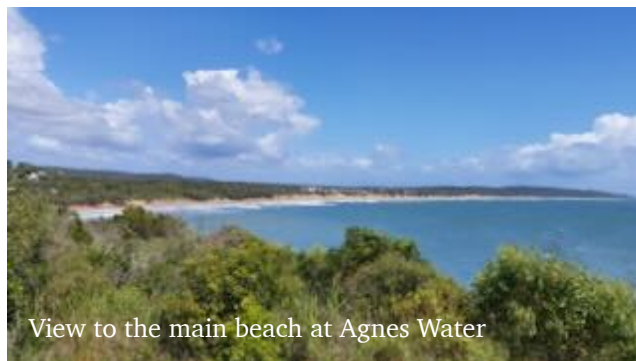
A mini (one night) break off boat.

7th November 2022. To Cania Gorge...via Agnes Water - which if anyone looks at a map, seems a crazy set of directions from Gladstone. However, our main 'adventure' today was to catch up with friends in Agnes Water...the trip to Cania this afternoon an efficient way to get to a preplanned walk.

Heading south

It was a relatively early start and we left Gladstone at 0650. In hindsight we could have perhaps left a little earlier if we had put the effort in, in order to start a 12 km walk in cooler weather. We were lucky with the walk chosen, paths linking coastal vegetation, scrub and forest all had a healthy dose of shade on this warmish day. The sky played its part as well with scattered clouds wafting across the sky keeping the sun at bay.

But I really wasn't taking much notice. There were five of us on this walk. I was the slowest, the fastest of us had four legs! And whilst I did admire the vegetation changes and content along the path between the carparks at the surf beaches (particularly the thicker habitat with cabbage palms), our focus was catching up with friends, admiring the scenery was a secondary consideration.



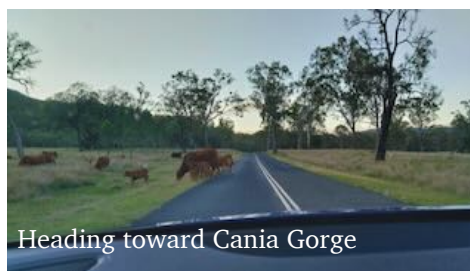
View to the main beach at Agnes Water

Heading inland

After lunch of fish and (for some of us) chips, we headed inland. There isn't a straight route to Monto from Miriam Vale on the Bruce Highway, although we did miss one cross country link (which we have taken before). This meant we had to travel a fair way south before we could head west. This made it a longer, and slower trip, not least because there were roadworks on the Bruce Highway. The western road was dirt but in good condition, the scenery varied, the country green, and the vistas prettier as one got closer to crossing the range toward Kalpower. The road was also steep in places and big signs near the Bruce Hwy suggests this road is not suitable for caravans. We had booked a cabin at Big 4 Cania Gorge. We were originally contemplating a motel room at Monto but all seem fully booked by the time we went to secure accommodation. We bought a chook and salad for dinner at one of the Monto supermarkets but it wasn't the best choice; the chook was that dry Andrew suggested it had 'crackling'!



Heading toward Cania Gorge



Heading toward Cania Gorge



Roadworks Bruce Hwy



Our 'cabin.'

Castle Mountain Lookout

A long and boring walk.... So the locals say

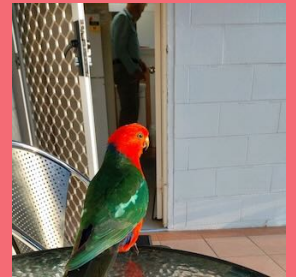
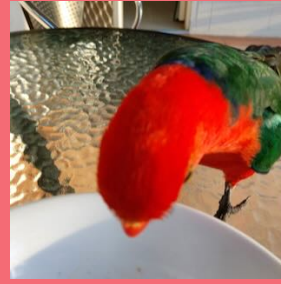
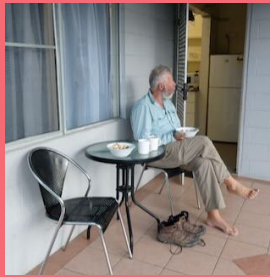
8th November 2022. We had breakfast with the camp 'floosies' after the alarm got us up around 0500. I had wanted to start walking at 0600 but we didn't start the trail until 0630 ish. The car suggested the outside temperature was around 11 degrees Celsius. Brrr.

After leaving the carpark the first part of the walk, as all walks in this area, heads through a small patch of darker 'wetter?' forest and crosses the creek (dry at the moment). We turned right at the sign for all walks and then after the junction to Dragon Cave (which we had a quick look at), and ignoring the walk to Bloodwood Cave, we spent a bit of energy going up more than 200 steps. This brought us to the Gorge Lookout. From here, according to the sign, there were 9.7 kilometres remaining until the Castle Mountain Lookout.

I was expecting an exposed track but it was mostly mottled and shaded, with the bush providing oblique shadows because the early morning sun was at a low angle. Of course on the way back to the car there was less shade as the sun was higher in the sky, but there were not too many spots with no shade at all.

I suppose the reason some people call this track boring is because there are no views along the way (apart from a distant and obscured view to the right near the Lookout end). You are surrounded by just bush. Bush in several forms though, different levels of vegetation, different levels of regeneration (which affects how open the undergrowth is) and at one point a more open habitat with xanthorrhoea as the understory.

I have a bit of a thing for xanthorrhoeas. I don't know why but seeing one plant brings a smile to my face, several plants I feel light headed, and a hillside of plants is delightful.



There were some obstacles on the way to the start of the walk...we had to encourage them to 'moove'.



The Parks information boards suggest allowing 7 to 8 hours for this walk. There is the information board at the start of the walk, a notification that this is a remote walk, and the 7 to 8 hour warning sign at the Gorge Lookout, then there is a further copy of this sign (with the 'you are here' points adjusted) a further two times along the track. The sign states that you should make sure you are going to be back at the carpark 'well before dark.' The last sign is only three kilometres from the end - which doesn't seem much until you realise that it will be six kilometres just to get back to this point.

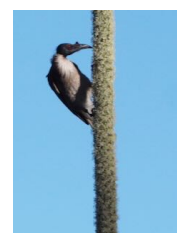
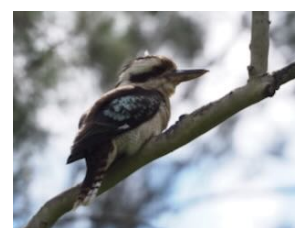
This old fire trail does not seem as though it is being maintained; there were quite a few fallen branches and trees, in one spot almost the entire upper part of a fallen tree blocks the entire track. Getting around most of these obstacles is not difficult. There are however three areas of concern, where the trees haven't quite fallen to the ground; two smaller girthed trees are angled across the track and leaning on other trees, which would hurt if they hit you but probably not cause too much damage (unless they hit you in the head). A larger girthed tree is being held up by its own twisted fibres - this one is the one I am worried about - If this tree fell at the wrong time then it would be disaster for anyone caught under it.

We started on the track at 0630 ish. We got back to the car at 1330. This was not bad timing for us as we had had a ten minute and a five minute break on the way to the lookout, a forty minute break at the lookout (where despite there being a couple of seats along the track, there are no seats at the end) and a five minute break on the way back.

We left the carpark at 1400 and drove back to Gladstone via Biloela.

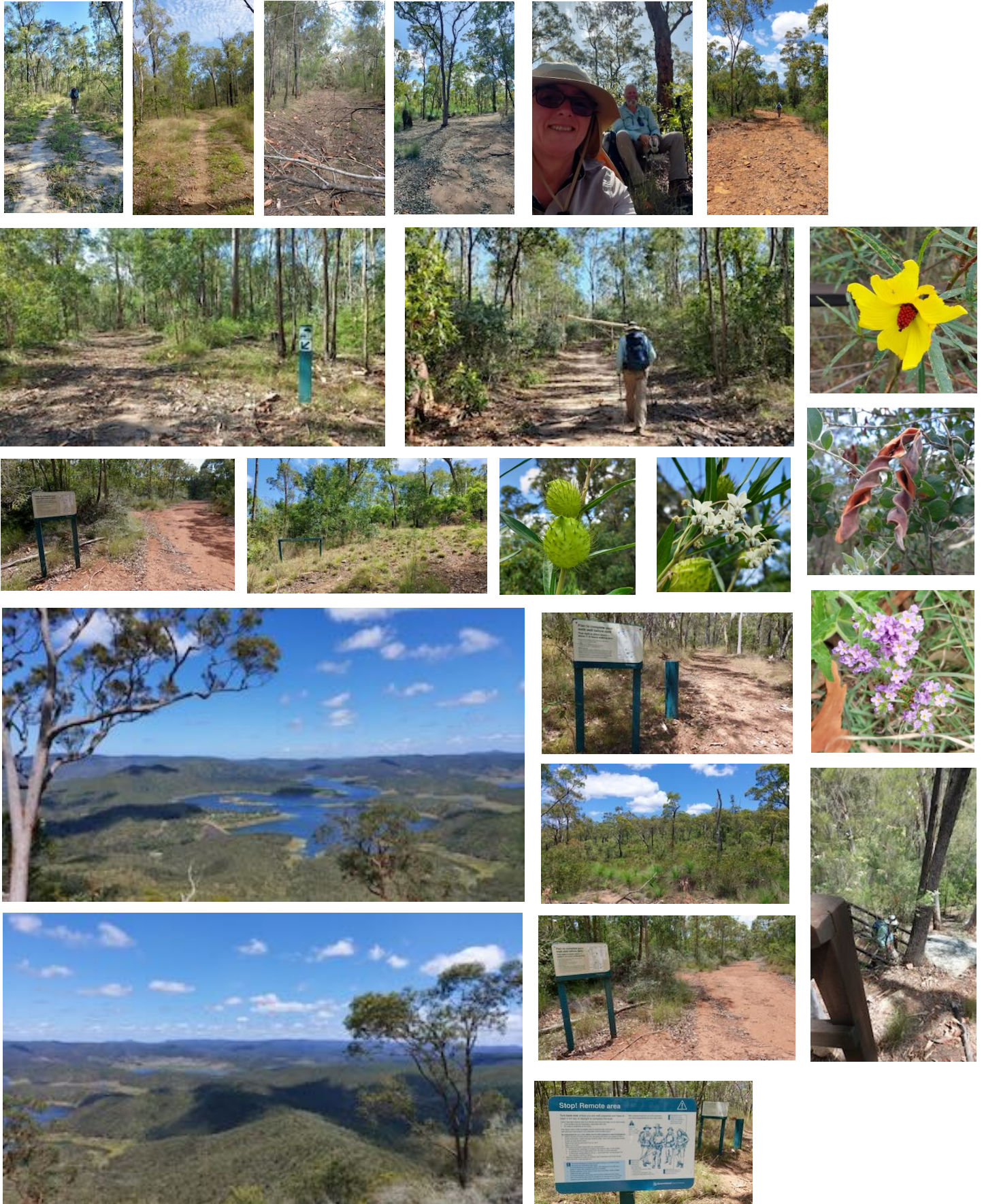
Two wallabies were seen near the carpark. The only other animals noted were the scurrying of lizards heard on the side of the track. Birds (from campground to walk to trip back to Gladstone); apostle birds, king parrots, rainbow lorikeets, 'craven', magpie, mudlark, kookaburra, Lewin honeyeater, whistling kite, sulphur crested cockatoo, drongo, little friarbird, noisy friarbird. There were also lots of small birds twittering and flying around but too quick to be identified.

We also met a father and son on the way back. They had turned around a kilometre or so past the Gorge Lookout. They were on holiday for a week, attending the fishing competition on the coming weekend. The son had gained a blister on the back of his heel - which Andrew attended to with our first aid kit. It wasn't surprising really - he was wearing Blundstones! From personal, painful and regretful experience - Blundstones are not the boots to be bush walking in!



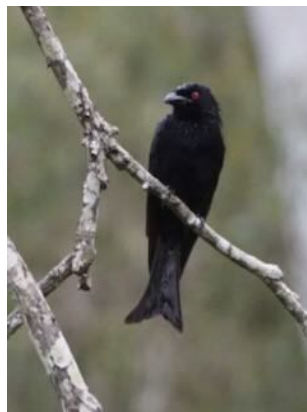
There are three signs along the track that point out how long the track is and how long it will take and ask you to ensure that you are back at the car park 'well before dark!'







The picnic area at the Trail Head is lovely but we were happy just to sit in the car and rest our feet. I did however go over and check out a couple of drongos flitting in the trees around the shelters....



Back at boat in the evening there was an astronomical event taking place: I missed the blood moon, but I watched the eclipse.....for a while. I have forgotten the settings for moon shots (I will have to recheck YouTube) but I did the best I could on a boat rocking around in the wind.

A slightly different perspective.

9th November 2022. If we were on our planned big walk now, we would be doing another 20 plus kilometre walk today. But apart from a couple of remote options (two or so hours' drive away) where we could walk from a 2WD carpark down a 4WD track, camp on the beach and walk back again, we seem to have covered the easily accessible options in the Gladstone region. As we had the car we decided instead we would make today's activity a local drive - and then perhaps finish off with a short walk in the evening.

So, after a leisurely breakfast, a bit of cleaning, and a shower when we got to shore, we headed off. We did have a couple of 'destinations' in mind; we wanted to visit two places we had been past in boat, but had never been to via land.

The Narrows: The first was The Narrows. Whilst there are roads that would get us through from closer to Gladstone we thought we would take the 'official' The Narrows Road from Mount Larcom to the isolated spot. The back roads are all dirt, but in good condition. We had an inkling we were heading in the right direction as we passed fishers driving the other way dragging 'serious' sized tinnies on their trailers.

Through the back of Mount Larcom settlement the road winds its way over and around small hills scattered with bush and farms, and passes through the edge of a state forest before reaching the shore. From this boat ramp, if you look obscurely at an angle you can see the cattle fence/gate at Ramsays Crossing. There is a small settlement here of old settled caravans, sheds and a small 'fibro' house right next to the ramp. We are not sure if it is a fishing community, or of a demographic that have nowhere else to go. We didn't engage in conversation, the individuals we did see didn't seem to want to look our way.

We moved on, driving back up the road for a little bit before turning a sharp right down Toms Road. This road also goes to a boat ramp. Here there were two 4WD's with trailers but not much else, only the metal shell of what was probably someone's old fishing hut. Looking at Google Maps this boat ramp seemed as though it would be closer to the exit on Curtis Island but from here it was further to the remnant familiar fence.

We drove back up Toms Road, noting the 'warning, crocodiles' notice where it met The Narrows Road, and retraced our steps for a few kilometres, to the west side of the state forest, before turning right and exploring the back roads here. Winding through bushy areas and farmland again (the paddocks were predominantly stocked with cattle - brahman and otherwise - but some house paddocks had cattle, sheep, goats and horses) we turned again to come out at Raglan on the Bruce Highway.



Cattle Crossing gates viewed from afar



We checked out the Raglan Tavern for lunch, rejected it, and headed for Bajool instead, only to discover their hotel didn't open until 1500 (pity as the food on the website looked good). We ended up with a burger at the Marmor BP truck stop for lunch.



Port Alma. The afternoon's drive was down another road we had seen and wanted to explore every time we have headed to Rockhampton.

The Port Alma Shipping Terminal (now apparently known as the Port of Rockingham) is an isolated port that, according to gpcl.com.au, is the largest hazardous goods hub in the nation, handling ammonium nitrate, tallow, explosives and general cargo.



The road leading to the Port eventually turns into flatland where the mangroves have been cleared to create a myriad of salt pans. There are two building complexes where the salt is stocked. I only had the phone with me to take photos (bad planning) so the shots are not as dramatic as they could have been. The sun of course went behind a cloud just as I was taking a photo of one of the stockpiles so the salt looks like a dirty light grey - with the sun on them, the stockpiles were a brilliant shiny white!



The Port of course was fenced off with a guard post. But there was not much there. One ship was in and one gantry looked to be loading pallets of bagged 'stuff.'

There is a public boat ramp down here, that leads to the muddy waters immediately adjacent the Port. A few smaller boats seemed to be anchored or moored to the upstream of the Port jetties (the old one being the Port jetty, and the new little one had official boats tied up on it.) A tug was also present anchored in the waterway, with two people in a smaller boat near its mooring.



We drove home after this, arriving back at the marina carpark at 1600. The idea had been to walk to the top of the Auckland Lookout from the Eastshores Precinct, but the access is blocked off so we just walked around the Eastshores Precinct instead. Compared with the previous three walks this was just a gentle stroll. We got back to the car around an hour later. We were back on boat at around 1720.



Animal life for the day was limited to cattle in paddocks, livestock in front yards and dead kangaroos on the side of the road. Birdlife wasn't as prolific as we had hoped, although we didn't have our binoculars and we would have been disappointed if there were many birds and we couldn't look at them. Magpie, cravens, mudlark, pied cormorant, lapwings, sparrow, swallows (assume welcome), corellas, sulphur crested cockatoos, galahs, a couple unidentified raptors, green heron, willy wagtails, gulls (species not noted), Indian miner, noisy miner, whistling kites.

Kookaburras seemed to be abundant everywhere, constantly flying past us as we drove, and perched in trees and on wires adjacent the road. The cutest birds spotted were probably the pair of squatter pigeons. One was about to walk across the road in front of us and we stopped. He stopped, looked at us, turned around walked off the road, turned around again, looked at us again, assessed his options and realising we had stopped, waddled back in front of us crossing from left to right, and then down by Andrew's door. It was very funny. His mate stayed on my side of the dirt road.

The spot of the day however should be



noted as the brolga flying low over the Bruce Highway in front of us just north of Mount Larcom



The Recalcitrant Gas Bottle

10th November 2022. Early this afternoon we went to get one of our gas bottles filled, and tootled off to the one retailer we knew could do it. 'There is something wrong with your bottle,' was the comment after the lass found us wandering around her store. 'The release valve isn't working!' What. All the bits were in place - they had checked that. They had even checked for spiders, as one of their staff got bitten a few years ago because a spider's 'nest' was on the bottom of a handled bottle (if we have a spiders 'nest' on the boat we are in trouble - I suspect the boat would no longer be on the water). All looked good. All didn't behave well though, and seemingly the release valve wasn't working. They double checked and compared it to another bottle. Nope. Money was refunded and they suggested we go swap it at the local hardware store.

So we tootled over to the local hardware store, Andrew went outside to pay for a bottle swap and I waited outside with the bottle. All was good until the lass from the store came out. Was the bottle reacting to her gothic tattoos, her black and white long fingernails or her dual coloured hair? I don't know the answer but as soon as she walked up to the bottle, the release valve, or something else, suddenly let go. We now had escaping pressured gas hissing out of a bottle and we couldn't stop it. The lass went inside to get some advice and came back out suggesting we needed to call Elgas to come and pick the bottle up! Just as we were on the phone to Elgas another staff member arrived. 'No problem,' he said. 'I've dealt with this before; I know what to do.' He quickly explained what needed to happen and then briefly disappeared back inside to get the relevant equipment. The upshot was that the leaking gas bottle was wrapped in wet rags and taken out the back. We ended up paying for a swapped bottle. We now have enough gas to last us until Christmas.

The morning hadn't been as nearly as unexpected. We had gone food shopping, although I had meant to plan a menu last night for the next couple of weeks to make shopping easier - but I had gone to bed early - so hopefully we have purchased enough.

Back on boat it was a day of small cleaning and clove oiling jobs. And washing some musty smelling clothes.

Getting ready to leave

11th November 2022. I was up at 0500 and the sun hadn't quite yet risen over Spinnaker Park. The southerly winds had all but disappeared. This mornings predictions were for easterlies, with light north easterlies to come in during the afternoon.

Exodus. We weren't the only ones with heading south on our minds. It seemed every time we looked up today another boat was leaving the marina. The winds were calm in the marina but were predicted to be stronger to the east. Still, I think most of the sail boats would be motoring. At one stage I counted 17 boats on marinetraffic.com that looked like they had come from the marina (or at least The Narrows).

We knew a boat that was due to leave from Pancake Creek today - their reasoning was that it was the last good, potentially sailing day for three days - and they had a timeline!

Our first 'official job' this morning was returning the car, which we did around 1000. Of course my first 'unofficial' job was continuing to rinse the mildew off clothes from the shelving downstairs, which I started not long after I got up. After we got back to boat the main job of the day was actually getting fuel - via tinnie via the fuel dock. We made two runs to the fuel dock to fill up the fuel tanks (because of the amount of gerry cans that we have) before putting the gerry cans away. Another job ticked off.

The remainder of the day was usual domestics, a bit of newsletter and I actually got some recreational reading in - even if it was only half an hour.



At Eastshores Precinct

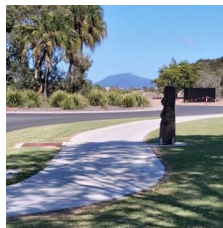


To Rodds Harbour

12th November 2022. We planned to leave the marina today. Given the weather it was likely to be three or more days before we would get back on land. I wanted to take every opportunity to get a walk in. So bribery was in order. I told Andrew that if he would walk with me to Spinnaker Park this morning we could get breakfast in the cafe. The bribe worked.

We had got to land at 0830, were having brekky in the cafe at 0930, along with lots of people and a few cheeky blue faced honeyeaters, mudlarks, sparrows and gulls, and we were back at boat just before 1100.

The mooring was dropped at around 1110. The anchor was down at Rodds Bay around 1450. The last hour had been a slow but smooth and quiet sail with the genoa only. It would have been nice for a longer sail but the wind either wasn't there, or was blowing from the wrong direction, so the rest of the journey had been with either one or two engines. The genoa was only used from where the shipping channel turned east, an earlier attempt furlled in again because of a wind drop.

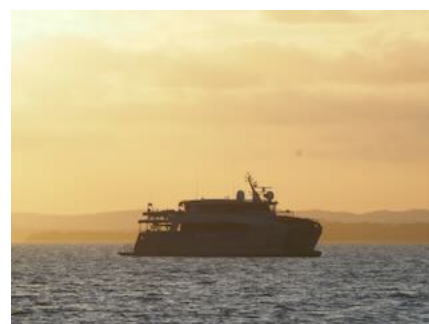


I have a 'thing' about ships. I am sure I could become a 'ship spotter' if I allocated the time. A couple of workers on this ship waved and ahoy-ed us....

13th November 2022. It was around 0515 when I first woke up. Whilst our blinds were down I could see the sun was well and truly above the horizon. I tried going back to sleep but my hips played up - which they do if I have been sleeping too long. So I got up, rinsed some more clothing and did some more newsletter. Checking the weather was an exercise in patience as the signal is not strong here. There was no wind and looking at the water I guessed it was around slack tide. 'Midgies were out!

Andrew battled with the generator battery, which should have been charged, and a gluing job on his paddle board. I, on the other hand, found myself washing front cockpit cushions (minus one), wiping down mesh, and polishing the boat. I also managed to bake lunch, do the dishes and continue the shelf clean up downstairs. I even managed to get some recreational reading in.

The weather predictions were pretty accurate. It was blowing around 8 knots northerly when the sun went down



Rodds Harbour to Burnett Heads

14th November 2022. The alarm was on for 0500. The hope was to get up and leave immediately but it was 0535 by the time the anchor came up. We were the first of the four boats in the anchorage to head out, but not the only, the ketch to our south followed us east toward Bustard Head and turned south, the Marine Parks vessel headed back to the Gladstone Marina precinct. After some discussion (due to a misinterpretation of a decision last night) we ended up putting the full main up with the genoa, motored out of the harbour, and turned the engines off a little before we turned east. We had a mixed sail to above Outer Rocks north of Bustard Head, with the Goto Point on our chart changing three times. Once we had cleared the rocks the genoa was furled and the main dropped to a second reef. We were going to try this configuration with the spinnaker but Andrew eventually decided there was not enough wind, so we dropped the main and deployed the spinnaker by itself.

The trip was initially slow and a bit washy. A friend suggested that after we got south of Agnes Water we might find we have a smoother ride with less swell. Amazingly this seemed to be the case even though we were hadn't changed direction...The smooth seas, however, didn't last.

When the wind picked up a bit we got faster. Andrew's cut off for the spinnaker was a consistent 16 knots apparent wind, but then as the seas were smooth he extended it, to 17. Then 18. Eventually when the wind began inching into bouts of 19 knots we dropped the spinnaker and pulled out the genoa. We dropped from a SOG of 8.3 knots to about 6 knots. Given we had had a slow start this meant that we were going to be pushing to get into the Burnett River by sundown.

Of course after we had dropped the spinnaker the wind dropped as well, but it was still averaging mid 16s. So perhaps we could have left the spinnaker up for a while. However, the genoa (only) was still doing a good job.

The sun had set by the time we got to the shipping channel and the light red glow of the western sky was our guide up the river. None the less, it was fully dark by the time the anchor was down, the only lights seen scattered on the top of masts, the shipping dock and the waterside houses. My night



perception has always been shocking so I was anxious coming in but I was fairly confident when we dropped anchor that there were no boats too close to be worried about.

We spent some time on the internet working out what food we were going to order from the US for our upcoming trek - only to find out at the end of the order that all their international orders have been stopped for the moment. Well, there's half an hour or so that I could have been doing something else! We went to bed around 2200

Burnett Heads to River Heads

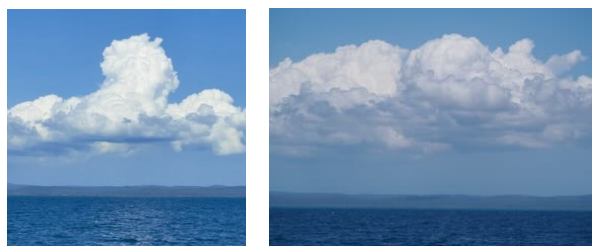
15th November 2022. As I walked out of the back cockpit at 0500 and started rolling the back shades up I noticed two other boats moving. One was a tri to our south. The other a mono to our north, the latter with a man on the bow. I was at the anchor well when the mono finally got their anchor up and came over. We have been keeping an eye on you, he said. That is nice, I thought. You came on at around nine o'clock, he said. We started at around half past five, I said. I then realised he was talking last night, not yesterday morning

He was convinced we had dragged. Nope, we haven't dragged. Not according to our gauges, I said. I can't remember his response. We had been up around 2100 last night. We checked the gauges before going to bed. All surrounding boats were a reasonable distance away. I am not sure what his issue was.

There were six boats heading out the shipping channel by the time we started travelling east. Whilst most had some sort of sail up we kept our poles bare until we turned toward the bottom of Hervey Bay, further east than the other boats to give us a better angle. We wanted to assess whether we put the standard sails up or, as expected, just the spinnaker.

At 0605 the spinnaker went up. At 1410 we dropped it, adjacent Kingfisher Bay, Fraser Island, and had the motor on briefly as we pulled out the genoa. A beam reach into River Heads had us overtaken by one of the Kingfisher Resort barges and we were anchored and settled in the 'hole' in the Mary River, just inland from the Susan River confluence at 1600 (having furled the genoa just as we got inside the Heads). We know at least one other boat who had made the same journey as us today, a powerboat anchored by the boat ramp near the Heads. Two other boats ended up anchoring near the River Heads Mary River entrance after we arrived but I don't know where they had started from.

An osprey caught a fish off our port bow as we entered the Heads, and half a dozen swallows welcomed us to the anchorage....I had to chase them off boat. I did a couple of little clean up jobs before settling in for the evening - washing the salt off the clears, wiping some mould I had missed earlier in the back cockpit, and putting some books away. I spent the late evening reading.



16th November 2022. The first bird I heard this morning was a channel billed cuckoo. It was 0500! I had got up a few minutes earlier; I assume I woke up because it was light outside not because we had got up at this time for the past two days so we could get big sails in. I had actually wanted to sleep in today!.

There was rain at Moon Point when I checked the rain radar before 0600. In fact by 0605 the calls of the bush birds in the mangroves and the shore birds on the sand bank that had been the background melody for the past half hour, had gone, and a mist was starting to envelop us. According to bom.gov.au the forecast for Hervey Bay was 30 degrees and a 20% chance of rain.



By 0630 I had two lots of 'rinsing' on the line. The mist was getting thicker and I suspect that these clothes would not be dry anytime this morning. The wind was almost non existent and the midgies were out - I had quite a few developing lumps over me when I came back inside - the challenge being not to scratch them.

At 0650 I was cooking pumpkin for muffins. It was quiet outside. The fog had started to lift again and I could see the river exit at the Heads. I heard a lone whimbrel calling.

There was a bit of a 'mad' panic at 0900. I had meant to send an email to a local friend last night and had got distracted. He had emailed us however and I saw the email when I turned the computer on this morning. The upshot was that if we could coordinate a catch up before we headed south we would. So after a call to Andrew at 0900 the decision was to catch up at the local cafe for a cuppa at 1000. Arrgh. I had to find some suitable, clean, going out clothes, get rid of the washing from the back, we had to decant the tinnie, untie the tinnie, and get ourselves over to the boat ramp (although even at low tide that shouldn't be a problem), as well as walk up the hill. All within the hour! We got to the cafe with a few minutes to spare. After a chat, and lunch, and a quick IGA

shop for tuna and eggs we walked down the hill again - we didn't take the bush track at all today.

The jetty had been occupied by one fisherman when we arrived, it was full when we returned. There were several fisherman, a couple of strange looking observers, and two people from America looking at birds, one who had very nice looking camera. Of course we chatted to them - thanks D & H for your time. We were back at boat around 1315.



I had planned to do some washing and polishing today but at the time of our return the day was now very hot and not conducive to working out in the sun (I was already suffering a burnt lower back that had been inadvertently been exposed last time I spent a long time working outdoors) so I resolved to do indoor jobs. In the end I did get outdoors and started the removal of the stuck tape that I had mentioned in my diary notes in October. It will need to be finished tomorrow but then will be ready for a polish.

The evening was spent watching the weather, discussing our departure options, and watching a movie.



17th November 2022. Polishing. Polishing. Buffing. Buffing. That's about all I did today. I did manage to squeeze in a cooked lunch (pumpkin muffins) and a chicken mushroom dish for dinner, but I went to bed very early. I don't know whether it was because I had a predominantly grain breakfast and lunch, or whether I had worn myself out polishing the boat; I had stiff shoulders, neck, thighs and calves.



going to learn much. Scrabbling in the long grass probably indicated a lizard; how big was hard to tell but we have seen reasonable sized monitors here before. Mid walk the predominant sound was insects and it was only at the very end that a few more bird calls became apparent, and a Lewins Honeyeater flitted around not far above us. There were surprisingly none of the usual raiders at the cafe (butcherbird/blue faced honeyeater) - maybe there were too many people as the cafe tables were full of patrons who had just returned from Fraser Island. We did note a pied butcherbird in the top of the decorative turret near the IGA but little birdlife after that until we got back to the boat ramp. A flock of whimbrels were feeding on the sandbank adjacent our anchorage as we got back



18th November 2022. It was calm enough this morning for Andrew to have a play with his drone, something he doesn't do as nearly as often as he would like, and he is still learning. None the less there were a couple of really nice shots taken. I spent the morning on some more polishing, this time the bottom section of the sides of the bridge deck cabin - now that I had 'almost' got rid of the glue residue from the tape. It is not perfect and a professional would have done better - but I didn't have a professional on hand!



The morning's excursion was a trip to shore and a walk up the bush track to the cafe at the top of the hill. After a coffee and a cuppa, and a visit to the IGA where we picked up some 'fresh' lettuce and an avocado, we followed the bush track back down again to the boat ramp. A pair of frolicking butterflies, one white, and one yellow and black, had greeted us as we had started our morning walk, but for a few minutes there wasn't much in the way of bird calls. The one call stopped as soon as I pulled the Merlin App up on my phone - then again that App hasn't been working for me anyway so I probably wasn't

to boat.

Once back at boat I was back to polishing, this time the top of the helm station roof. I also managed a small amount of washing, including the hatch covers, and finished off the first tranche of polishing on the top of the gunwales after Andrew had attacked the rust marks. A couple of local dolphins casually bobbed past at around 1630 and two boats passed us and anchored upstream in this anchorage; there goes the Serenity! The sun went down below a lone collation of small



When I went upstairs to wash and polish the top of the helm roof, I discovered someone with very big feet had visited whilst we had been on shore!



19th November 2022. By 0800 I had put a top coat of polish on the top of the helm station and the top and side of both the port and starboard gunwales. I had also wiped down the top hatches and put the hatch covers back. It was already windy enough that I wasn't keen on getting off boat, although the boat I had been hoping to catch up with (in this morning's calmer weather) had not arrived in the area yet. In fact I didn't know where they were and surmised perhaps they had changed their plans (which were originally hiding at Garry's Anchorage but it was full. I am not surprised).

During the day we spent a good deal of time on getting our stuff together for NZ. The highest wind gust we saw on the gauges was 18 knots, but we weren't checking all the time.

By the end of the day the angled sides with the leopard paws got a top coat of polish and the uprights of the back cockpit, at least up to where I could reach under the solar panels, got a first polish (I will leave the more difficult bits until it is calm enough to put the solar panels on angle).

There were five boats in this anchorage by sundown.

I did get a bit of a break with some recreational reading today. - but it wasn't long. I went to bed reasonably early.



20th November 2022. I was up at 0630 and was immediately outside putting a topcoat on our curved sides and the uprights of our front cockpit front. It was 0715 by the time I came in. It was grey outside. And windy - but not too bad. Averaging around 17 knots, although I saw over 21 at 0750. Potential thunderstorms were forecast for this afternoon.

Changing my activity I worked on the diary notes and finally got around to soaking a mooring line that had got wet in Gladstone Marina Harbour - I didn't want to put that away until it was clean (er/ish). Then it was back to polishing and buffing and the bottom of the boat topsides had a top coat put on as well as the uprights for the top of the back cockpit roof. This is an exhausting job by hand and I pulled Andrew outside to help me buff. The wind picked up further during the day and for a while the wind was blowing consistently in the low to mid twenties - I saw over 25 knots on the gauges at one point.

From mid afternoon, given the forecast of thunderstorms, we kept an eye on the rain radar. Over several hours there were three systems that may have been an issue. Fortunately they either dissipated or veered off before they got to us, although we did see rain in the distance and the occasional bout of lightening.

Two boats came in during the late afternoon. One anchored way to the east of us so he wasn't an issue. The other one, who was pleasant enough and waved at us on the way past, however did cause me some angst. In the beginning he headed off west toward some monohulls and I turned my attention elsewhere, but he had clearly thought next to us was more appropriate and returned to between us and another cat to put his anchor down. Not ideal but too far away to be a real problem so I returned inside and again focussed on other things. The next thing I noticed was that he was picking his anchor up and moving..... to in front of us! What is he doing? Yikes! Closer this time and closer to our anchor although still technically, according to my golf ranger and our assumed anchor location, outside our turning circle. Okay. Not ideal but.... Then we see him move again. This time a similar distance away on the other side of our turning circle, and now that the wind had changed direction a little, placed directly in front of us. It was now blowing 25 knots. Ahh! well, they are on board, I thought in consolation, they will be around if they start to drag.

But they weren't on board for long. Who gets off boat, just after anchoring, with 25 knots blowing and a boat directly behind you. The occupants of this boat did! I thought this was a private boat but now I am not so sure.... So for a couple of slightly anxious hours I watched the wind speed and the position of their boat until they were back on board.

In the end, all was good but.....there was adrenalin running through my system that probably didn't need to be.

Because of the physical activity today and yesterday I found myself exhausted in the early evening and went to bed early. Andrew was in bed before midnight.



I wondered about this boat when it tried to cut the top of the sandbank to get to our hole. Like other boats, it decided to stop adjacent us to go looking for bait in the sand. Clearly these guys hadn't taken notice of the tides; at one point they were well and truly high and dry!



River Heads to Tin Can Bay Inlet

21st November 2022. At 0420 when I got up briefly there was no wind. But there was the odd midgie. The sun wasn't quite over the horizon but the beautiful orange hue was worth a photo... 'pity photos are never quite as majestic as the real thing. The dawn chorus was singing. It has been a long time since I have heard a full dawn chorus rather than just one or two birds. Given the time I went back to bed. Briefly. We both got up at 0500.



By 0530 the anchor was up, and we were motoring out of the anchorage, the cat to our east already motoring out in front of us. I waved farewell to the adjacent cat (the one who had moved around a lot) after I put the bridle lines up, and we were on our way.

Andrew was reluctant to put the genoa up. I don't know why. Given our speed at the time we should get about 30 minutes of use out of it before we turned south. I convinced him however and we managed to gain a couple of knots of boat speed. The wind had been rather light before we started the engines, it was now blowing around 12 knots; I was glad we could use the genoa whilst the angle was useful.



By the time we turned south at around 0610 we had gained nearly 2 knots. And from there we got faster, although the apparent wind speed had dropped off, we now had the tide with us

The engines were turned off at 0630. The wind speed was now 16 knots and although from behind us and prob not influencing the genoa too much, the speed of the tide meant we were travelling along quite nicely.. our 'speed over ground' was 6.5 knots (our boat speed was 4.9 knots). There were a couple of very brief periods where the engine went on - when the wind angle was useless or had dropped a bit and we needed steerage help (over the shallow bit of Sheridan Flats) before going on back on again for the rest of the trip at 0950. At this point the wind had dropped out significantly and our boat SOG was 3.3 knots. Our boat speed was 0.2 knots! We had again lost steerage.



The anchor was down around 1100, on the western side of the Tin Can Bay Inlet, in a 'not so ideal' spot. We were always going to cop the predicted northerlies, but we should be protected from the fetch of the Straits from the north east. The problem was the wind was blowing nor-nor-east and this was indeed giving us the fetch of the Straits - including the 27 knots of wind that came up around 1500 at the edge of a rain system which had developed off Yankee Jacks, and was making its way south along Fraser Island. Looking at the rain radar we were at least going to miss getting wet.



The wind did eventually swing north east later in the evening and we got some protection. The wind then swung as predicted down toward the south west. The wind by itself however wasn't the problem over night - the wind against tide was, and we had a slightly uncomfortable (very jiggly) night.



Tin Can Bay Inlet to Morton Island, Morton Bay

22nd November 2022. We got up just after 0530. Andrew went straight to the computer to check the weather. I went to the back to roll up the back covers. 'Where's the tri,' I asked no one in particular - a trimaran had anchored to our south east yesterday afternoon on the other side of the inlet. It wasn't anchored there anymore and my first thought was that maybe it had moved in the uncomfortable conditions overnight - however just outside my vision to the east was a very quiet trimaran - he was sailing up the inlet, albeit slowly. Clearly he wanted an early morning start too. We picked the anchor up, not long after this,

The weather predictions hadn't changed. High tide at the Wide Bay Bar was 0640. We couldn't dawdle. We had to move. The anchor up at 0600 and motored north, turning east to go through bar at 0635.

I couldn't convince Andrew to put our sails up - he wanted to motor through the Wide Bay Bar...which was fine but I thought putting the main sail up before we crossed the bar might save him fighting the swell at the other end.

The bar was flat - relatively speaking. The only 'waves/swell' we had to deal with was the bow waves of the the three power boats that passed us (one going east, two going west) all at around the same time. At 0730 we were outside the bar, our sails were up, and we were sailing south.

Originally we had decided to sit out the strong south westerlies at Double Island Point, but predictions indicated the wind was going to be lighter closer to the coast, and eventually they were going to turn in an anticlockwise direction to east and then north east. We could probably sail in that. So, today, just like last year when our original destination after exiting the bar had been Double Island Point, we kept going.

Initially we were doing over 8 knots but we settled down to high 7's still north of Double Island Point. That boat speed didn't remain however and to take best advantage of the changing wind speeds and slight direction changes we set the autopilot to sail on '45 degrees to the wind.' This was ok for a little while until we spotted a charter fishing boat ahead of us - with a sea anchor out and a few customers around the back deck. We took manual control of Sengo and sailed to the stern of the fishing boat before resuming our course. Of course the wind wasn't exactly where we needed it to be for a run on our rum line so after a little while we tacked - and headed directly west. Tacking back again put us in an uncomfortable collision with the swell - which wasn't all that big - so we spent some time getting the right angle to the wind to make it comfortable.

The wind also decided to drop .At 1030 we put the motor on. At 1055 we took the boat off wind steerage. We had mixed results for the next fifty minutes and wind was all over the place - boat speed at one point going down to 1.9 knots due to tide and swell interruption.



At 1120 i turned the engine off again. The wind seemed to have settled on the port (East) side. The swell was still upsetting a smooth sail. But we had missed the southerly wind tranche. The engine was back on at 1220 and then off again an hour later. By this time we had decided given the time, that if we were to enter Morton Bay in the dark, and under sail, it was probably more prudent to do it where there were less hazards in the water, and so we headed for the main shipping channel on the west side.

The shipping anchorage near Cartwright Point had around a dozen ships anchored over quite a wide area. Except one. Watch that boat, Andrew said. All the other ships are facing the wind - that one isn't. And indeed that one was under motor - sort of heading our way. Taking note of Brisbane VTS calls we determined the pilot was on his way out to this behemoth. By the time the pilot was on board we were south of the ship, but, we weren't yet across the shipping channel. Timing was going to be interesting

by the time this ship turned around and charged south at 13.3 knots.

Okay - if we turn to starboard and follow the outside of the channel we can follow it west and keep out of the way of the incoming vessel. There were two issues with this, not least of which was the vessel Brisbane coming north along that western edge of the main shipping channel also to keep out of the way of the incoming ship. The other one was we would be going further away from our destination (which we had now amended from Peel island to Tangalooma Roads south of Tangalooma on Morton Island to make it a shorter day) and would need to, if we stayed outside the channel, go over the wavy very shallow sandbanks below Bribie Island (we had waypoints on these sandbanks that we had used some years before but the sand could have shifted).

We did turn starboard for a time, and waited for the ship to turn toward the channel and pass us. And waited. And waited. Hurry Up! In the end, as the ship got closer, we did a sharp turn to port, sailed into the wind, got the boat speed up to high 7's and low 8's and sailed behind the passing vessel. This changed our sail plan and we ended up heading down the shallow shoals (the deeper bit of the shallow shoals) directly toward the 'north west corner' of Morton Island. We did avoid the darker blue patches on the chart and ended up changing direction a couple of times more, making the sail technically longer but avoiding three other ships using the channel.

Going into the wind was a delight from a sailing point of view - our speed had increased and the swell had flattened out. There were no clouds to the east and the stars shone brightly over Morton Island, at least until the vicinity of Tangalooma where light pollution had some effect. The wind however was dropping and although we persisted (getting slower was an advantage to let two ships pass in the channel (one in each direction) we eventually decided enough was enough. We were less than four nautical miles as the crow flies from our intended anchorage. But with the tide against us we were doing 2 knots speed over ground.

At 2235 the engines went on. Soon after the genoa was rolled in. At around 2300 the main was dropped - after getting ourselves into the now empty shipping channel (after Big Lilly (yes, that is the name of the ship) and her friends had passed. Another of these ships was called Marianetta - have we missed something - there seem to be quite a lot of big ships with girls names these days!). As it turned out there would have been no point persisting with the sails anyway because at 2315 true wind had dropped to less than 4 knots....we had dropped the sails at the right time.

The buildings (or outside lights) at Tangalooma were lit up in a long row but the occupied area seemed longer as a ship was passing, his side lights the same height as those on shore. It took me a while to realise this and my first thought



was that I didn't think the resort and town area was so vast.

At Tangalooma Roads (some know it as a Lucinda Bay I think) we had motored down around the south side of the shoals before turning north and settling behind them - according to our chart plotter there is a small gap between the top of the shoals and the mainland that should be navigable - but our electronic charts are old and we haven't got the updates, and we certainly weren't going to be taking any chances at this time of night.

The anchor was down, south of two anchor lights, in Tangalooma Roads a couple of minutes before midnight.

Tangalooma Roads to Peel Island.....to Canaipa Point

A slightly frustrating day

23rd November 2022. As per yesterday I got up just after 0530. As per expected the wind was blowing from the north west. But it was light - below 8 knots and not really making any difference to the angle of the boat - I suspect tide had a greater influence. The little boat to our south looked like it was on more of a lee shore than us (and the two cats north of us) but the little boat wasn't behind the sand bank.

I wasn't really trying to hear bird calls this morning. Waking up after less than six hours sleep was hard enough. Early morning was spent listening to a Youtuber on Brexit (we have been following this chap for some time) and wiping the salt off the stanchions. At 0742 I heard a channel billed cuckoo to the north - it is not the most melodious bird sound

We were going to have a hot breakfast and then head south. The side on swell had increased a little by 0800 so Andrew suggested we have a cereal breakfast and do the hot breakfast for lunch when we got to Peel Island. The wind speed was now around 4 knots true.- If we waited for the wind to come up it would be mid afternoon and blowing 15 to 20 knots - this would give us a nice sail - even with genoa only, but it may not give us enough time to get to Peel Island before dark. I don't really like anchoring in the dark except where it is necessary. Therefore, we would be motoring today

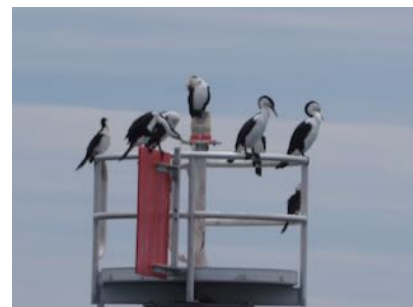
Not everything goes to plan. We got to Peel Island with mostly motor - the genoa was out most of that time but only had the sail to itself for a short period. There were quite a few boats at Peel and some idiot had placed three crab pots in precarious spots in the anchorage, which meant no boats could anchor around them. We tried one spot and didn't take. Tried again and didn't take and then gave up and headed for Canaipa passage, an



anchorage which unfortunately would have a mighty big fetch but we knew once anchored we would hold.

Our first attempt didn't work. Our second attempt was dubious and whilst we bounced around for a little while and were marked outside our original radius all looked good mid afternoon. It was checking the instruments with around 16 minutes of official daylight left that we found we had problems...the anxiety of this wasn't helped with the increasing wind (it was supposed to be decreasing in this area) and the proximity of two other boats.

So ignoring some magnificent cloud formations which would have made good photos, we picked the anchor up and put it down a bit further to the north west. All seemed well on first bite. And it held. And the boat stopped rocking around. And we went to bed confident we weren't going to move. It hadn't exactly been the day we had been expecting.



Canaipa Point to Tiger Mullet Channel

24th November 2022. The great thing about a really high high tide is that it gives you a better chance of getting over two low spots at some distance apart. The not so great thing about it is that at a third spot on today's journey we would have been happy with a low. Going under the powerlines is always fraught with anxiety, despite the fact we have seen a boat with a taller mast clear the wires on the top of a spring tide. But we made all three pinch points with ease today (as much as you can say that looking up under powerlines) and settled ourselves in Tiger Mullet Channel at around 1000. We had been up early and I had hoped to get off boat but that exercise was put off until tomorrow. Instead we sorted some food for NZ, tossed around a couple of storage ideas for Sengo for the coming year, and polished some of the deck near the tramp.

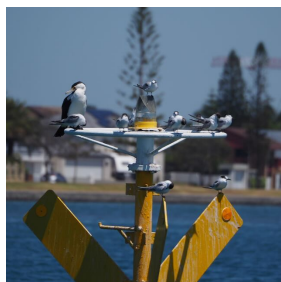
I also managed some recreational reading, and rinsed a couple of internal blinds.



Tiger Mullet Channel to Paradise Point (via Runaway Bay)

25th November 2022. The sun was shining brightly in our bedroom cabin window at 0530. I got up. Andrew got up a few minutes later. Bush birds were singing outside. I could tell it was going to be hot. Conditions outside were still and I could already hear a boat's engine outside - clearly someone had got up earlier than us. I finished a first polish of fibreglass near the tramp edges.

When we had been originally heading to Peel Island Andrew had suggested, because the weather was going to be calm, that we stay a few days to enjoy it. Terrific. We could get his paddle-board going - it still has a leak -and/or possibly get the kayak out. When we didn't stop at Peel and ended up at Canaipa instead we thought when we moved south we could get the few days of little wind recreation at Jumpinpin, so until late yesterday I was looking forward to heading over there in the tinnie or kayak (we wouldn't get that far on the paddleboards even if we had plugged all the leaks) and enjoying some quiet days and some long beach walks....but...



The last time we went shopping was in Gladstone. We were now running out of fresh food. If we waited until next Monday or Tuesday as originally planned, the bom.gov.au forecast suggested we would be travelling in the tinnie and getting very wet. Waiting any longer was not feasible - windy.com was predicting gusts to mid thirties (although bom.gov.au wasn't quite as scary) on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Whilst we could probably eek out some food from the cupboards for the next week to ten days, it wouldn't necessarily be healthy. We were also hoping to catch up with **Ophelia** who was going to be out of action from Thursday. So for comfortable conditions to go shopping and socialising - today was it. There goes my few days of remote beach relaxing....

But fortunately it wasn't going to be an early start.... To get out of Tiger Mullet Channel we had to wait for the tide.

The anchor was eventually up at 0830 and we cleared Whalleys Gutter with no issues. Like

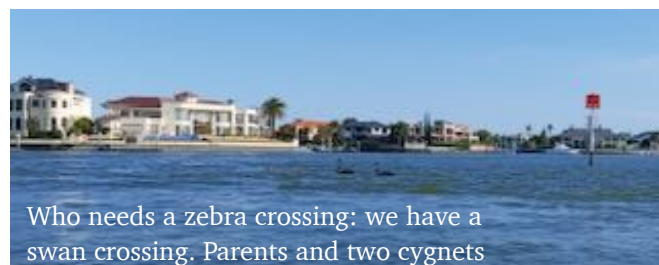
yesterday there wasn't a little pied cormorant to be seen on the markers in Whalleys Gutter although the first marker did have a swallow on it, and the last, a tern. Other birds along the Gutter included one intermediate and one great heron, both wandering around a swamp that would soon be under water (it was under water at yesterday's high tide) and a whistling kite - which was close and would have made a great photo but as usual I didn't quite have the appropriate camera to hand.



Oh, when was the last time we saw the Gold Coast!



Heading up the canal to go shopping



Who needs a zebra crossing: we have a swan crossing. Parents and two cygnets

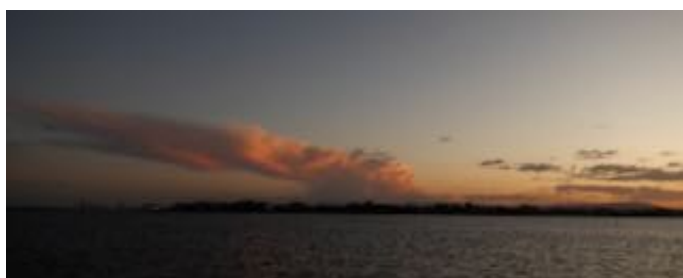
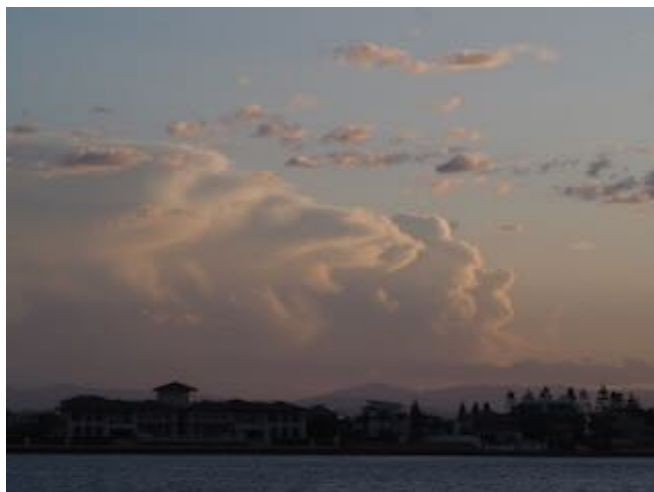
Turning south into the main flow of traffic we noted, but weren't particularly surprised at, the amount of vessel traffic around; quite a lot of which was fishing tinnies. We had to remind ourselves: 'This is the Gold Coast - weekends usually start on Thursdays!'

The anchor was down outside the canal at Runaway Bay at 1030. We were back on boat after raiding the supermarkets, and a quick nori roll lunch in the food court, at 1235. High tide at Runaway Bay was at 0934 so we were on a dropping tide from the time we anchored, and there wasn't that much water under our keels to start with, so we wanted to leave with a bit of haste. Fridge and freezer stuff went in the fridge and freezer without getting decanted into smaller

containers, and veggies shoved into the fridge downstairs needed to await sorting at a later time.

Of course it all didn't go to plan. Somewhere in the back of my mind I knew the current here mid tide was strong and I felt my thumb jamb inside the ropes, and start to lose feeling, whilst we were trying to get the tinnie up. With bow waves from motor boats and jet skies and the swirl from a kite surfer skimming past I just wanted to get out of there. In my haste I got the anchor chain stuck - it wouldn't go up and it wouldn't go down - and my thoughts reverted back to Hunter Island last year. Andrew fixed this with a hammer and screw driver and we were on our way. Because we wanted to catch up with a fellow boat who was anchored around Paradise Point we headed for the gutter opposite the end of the Coomera River. The anchor was down around 1400.

We spent the mid to late afternoon with ***Ophelia*** on shore. It has been 18 months approximately since we last met this boat, and that was in Dover, Tasmania - when we were officially on foot, but because of injury we were actually travelling by car. Given differing plans for next



Paradise Point back to Tiger Mullet Channel

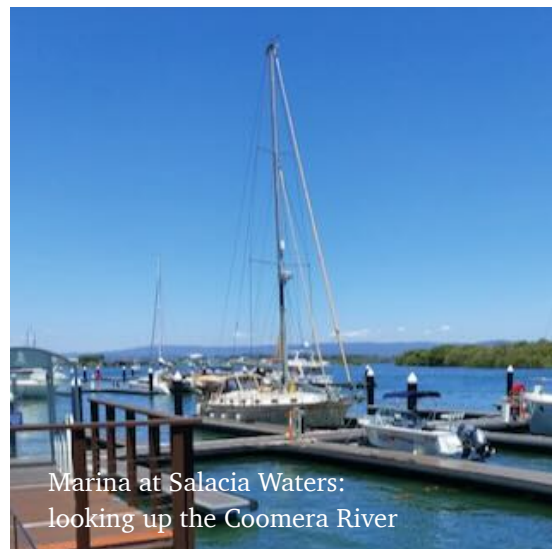
26 November 2022. I was up at 0300. I had gone to bed around 2100. I did half a yoga session (my back and neck were grumpy) and then, feeling invigorated, did a little bit of newsletter work. It was quiet and still outside. At around 0330 a power boat headed north - I heard it, I didn't see it. An oyster catcher had cried when it flew past and a koel called from somewhere on shore for a few minutes

Pre dawn light was the familiar orange. There was a grey jagged line above the horizon of the vegetation on South Stradbroke Island; which indicated there was a storm out to sea. I knew it was a fair way out and didn't think much more about it until the boat tuned with the tide, and I thought I saw a flash of lightening - which must have been in my subconscious because there was no way I would have seen lightening for a storm that far distant. When I actually checked the the rain radar there was indeed a line of opal storms out to sea. They were heading east, there was no threat to us.

We were catching up with **Ophelia** again this morning - a coffee at the 'Artisan' Bakery at 0830. I had hoped that we could get to shore an hour earlier and get a walk in before our cuppa. However, whilst Andrew was up in time to get to shore at this time, I wasn't. I was still in bed because after three hours of being up and getting some newsletter done, and starting the tax for last year, I suddenly, funnily enough, found I was a bit tired, and went back to bed at 0600.

So we got to shore around 0830, had our cuppa catch up, and then, based on the time and the tides, I worked out we had time for a walk (just) - although in the end the usual 45 minute stroll took around an hour because we stopped and said hello to a young dachshund. The wind was light, there were practically no clouds, and lots of people were out and about in the sunshine -it was a beautiful morning. After getting some sausages at the butcher and a couple of items at the FoodWorks, we were finally back on boat around 1135. The anchor was up at 1145. We were already on a dropping tide but because it was such a high tide we had a bit of time to get up Whalleys Gutter and into our Tiger Mullet Channel anchorage.

The wind had picked up a bit by the time we had got back to Sengo, and for some of the the journey we had the genoa out to help the motors along, until we got to the thin channel before the turn off to Jacobs Well when we furled it back in again. From a distance the Tippler Anchorage looked full with over thirty boats, there were at least thirty boats at Jumpinpin , and the anchorage at Green Island seemed full as well. It was a popular weekend to be in the Broadwater. As usual however, there



Marina at Salacia Waters:
looking up the Coomera River



One for the books: we are
overtaking a power boat!

was no one where we anchor and we put the anchor down at in our 'private' little spot at 1315.

The wind was now blowing around 15 knots plus so pulling the side shades out from the back cockpit was not possible. We did open up the along the back though, and the front mid section of our covers was rolled up to let the breeze through. The wind eventually got to around 20 knots.

I had bought a loaf of 100pc Spelt bread at the bakery. Andrew suggested an indulgent French Toast for lunch. We had it topped with sliced banana and honey; it was very nice. I spent the afternoon on newsletter and making phone calls. I spent the evening reading and plugging tax receipts into a spreadsheet (that was not fun). I went to bed just before 2200. Andrew did the dishes before retiring.

A walk on the sand - South Stradbroke Island

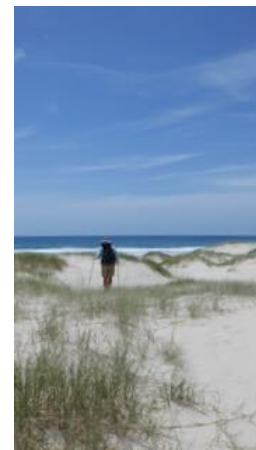
27th November 2022. The sun was already up when I got myself out of bed at 0615. But light grey clouds dominated the sky. The wind was calm, but fortunately there were only a couple of mozzies out as I did a couple of minutes of eye exercises out on the back steps. The first bird heard was a striated(green) heron, then came the early chittering of bush birds, before the background noise of a boat engine somewhere punctuated the more gentle sounds (initially this sounded like a chainsaw but I dismissed this option as my brain woke up).

Whilst we are probably not doing as much walking as we should, our longer walks where we have been able to get them (Mount Archer and Castle Mountain Lookout) have been good for distance practice but not for weight practice as we have only each been carrying a day pack. Today we wanted some weight practice, so with our almost fully packed hiking backpacks we ventured onto land. We left Sengo at 0930, and started walking (after getting our socks and shoes on) at 1000.

There was no particular destination in mind, the walk to Tipplers for instance was far too long for today (from both a practical point of view, we were training and this was the first time for a long time that we were carrying significant weight and didn't know how long we would last, and from a time perspective, we would not be back to boat before the predicted stronger winds and potentially rain), so we walked the usual track across Island and then turned north for thirty minutes before turning around and returning the same way.

We found the widish tracks across the island, as we remembered from last time ,were thinner, the less wide tracks were thinner still, and the thin tracks, seemed almost non existent; vegetation had grown up and out so much along our usual cross island path near the tip of South Stradbroke Island. Which is good - most of it was green, patches of bare track now had vegetation showing through, and it is nice to think that the downpours last season were positive in some places.

We were back at the tinnie around 90 minutes after we started and back at Sengo ,and had the tinnie tied back up, at 1205. The wind had started to pick up and there seemed to be a light rain on the adjacent hills. Perhaps we got back just in time.

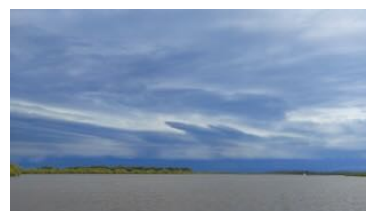




Clearly the walk had some affect on me and I was snoozing at around 1400 when a clap of thunder woke me up. The rain started just after this but it was light - according to the rain radar we were on the very edge of a group of opal systems to our north that were covering Brisbane and Morton Bay. There was no real wind - the highest gust we saw was 17 knots.

The evening was spent setting up some technology for watching the internet easily on our television. It is not particularly difficult technology but we have struggled with it in the past and because we have had such a period between purchasing the item and setting it up, we had to wait until it had downloaded an update. After enjoying a couple of tv shows on demand we went to bed around 2230.

There was a mozzie floating around the boat when we went to bed and buzzing around our cabin when the lights went out. I hid myself under the sheet and hoped she would go away.



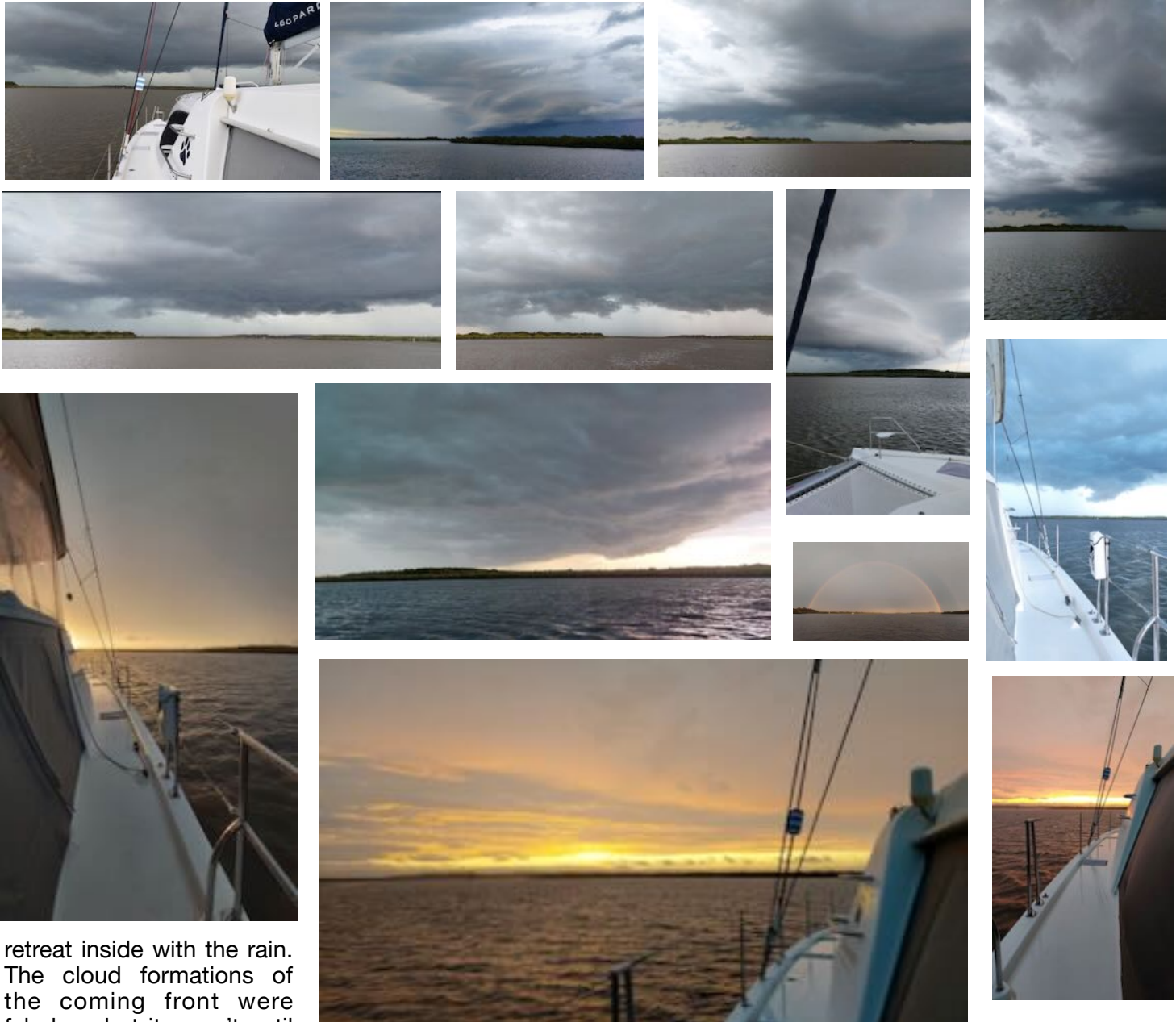
Blues to Greys, and finally, a Sunset

28th November 2022. We both got up around 0530. The sun was very bright to the east but was sitting next to some very grey clouds. According to the rain radar, these clouds were way out to sea. There was also a screen of grey clouds to the west - but the rain radar indicated any rain to the west was dissipating. The forecast was however 70 pc chance of a storm today - afternoon and

evening - possible thunderstorm. The forecast on windy.com had changed - winds during today were predicted to be lighter than they were expected to be from yesterday's forecast. None the less, I decided that staying on boat was prudent - tomorrow morning looked better for a walk. We had plenty to do.

At 0550 it was calm and we could hear bush birds and shorebirds. By 0700 however the wind had picked up enough to cancel out any ideas I had about cleaning the rest of the cockpit cushions.

So with newsletter, reading, yoga, a bit of clove oiling, some research on NZ and walking techniques, and the dishes, the day was just about full. **Ophelia** was anchored just 'downstream' from us and offered to come over for a late afternoon catch up. Given the coming storm I am surprised he still came. I set up the front cockpit for entertaining and decided that would do until we had to



retreat inside with the rain. The cloud formations of the coming front were fabulous but it wasn't until I went out at around 1715

that the threat intensity of the coming storm was realised. There was green in the clouds. Green can mean hail. I 'furled down' the middle flap of the front covers and swore at the green clouds. That was Ophelia's lead to leave, and he got back to boat a couple of minutes later, just as the first rain came down. Given that, according to the rain radar, the rain band was long and had a reasonable width to it, we were surprised it wasn't rougher or more intense. The wind picked up quickly as it had done in Tin Can Bay a couple of years ago, but for quite a while the wind speeds were low to mid twenties. The highest gust was 29.8 knots. Fifteen minutes later the intensity of the rain had reduced (I could actually see things around me - it had been a whiteout for a while) but the rain was still coming. Andrew managed to cook our lamb chops in light rain on the BBQ out the back as a double rainbow graced our presence to the east. The clouds had moved on enough to allow a sunset to the west - just - but it was still raining as it got dark.

29th November 2022. I got up at 0545. Andrew was up earlier. All seemed quiet outside and it looked like one side of the boat was getting rain whilst the other wasn't. Bush birds called. There was a pigeon call and an egret wandered around on the distant exposed mudflats.

I had intended to go for a walk this morning as the wind was predicted to be low, but a band of oncoming rain put an end to that idea. It didn't last long when it did arrive, but because of the afternoon winds were potentially picking up we didn't get off boat. The only exercise: I managed half a yoga session late evening. **Ophelia** left the area late morning. **Anui** arrived early afternoon and came across to say hello mid afternoon. We haven't physically caught up with **Anui** for quite some time. Then again, we haven't physically caught up with many boats - it has been a low visitor season.

Jobs of the day; I took the hatch covers off (so they weren't in the way of the oncoming rain and I intend to do a bit of a wash of the deck when the rain comes over the next couple of days), put one of the curtains that I had rinsed the other day back up, and tidied the living area (as we had guests). I also managed some recreational reading, and newsletter. Andrew managed to successfully unstick a zip on his hiking pack.



Wind and Rain

30th November 2022. The wind probably sounded worse than it was! Some time in the middle of the night (around 0130 I think) I put the gauges on; 18 knots was the highest wind gust that I saw. At 0430 when I got up again, the gauges were indicating wind was blowing high teens to early twenties and the top gust was 25.9 knots

At 0620 (ish) we again found ourselves, like yesterday, with one side of the boat getting wet and the other wasn't. Grey clouds were around and the rain radar indicated this little band of rain was heading from south east to north west, whilst there was a much larger band to our north travelling in the opposite direction.

Winds throughout the morning blew around the low 20's, and continued almost non stop at similar strengths into the afternoon. The skies were constantly grey and for most part of the day there was a light drizzle. By sundown (which of course we didn't see) the 'band' of rain on the bom.gov.au rain radar was to our north west, of significant size taking up a large proportion of south east Queensland, and heading in a south east direction. The winds of course were coming from the south east heading in the opposite direction. Rain was predicted for the coming week.

The radio traffic today was dominated by VMRs reading the weather reports - gale warnings to the north and south of us. VTS Brisbane were advising ships to 'up anchor' and head off shore, further away from the pilot boarding grounds.

Several boats passed us. One hired houseboat headed for the local known anchorage at Green Island but other boats disappeared down channels and around corners, thankfully, I didn't want anyone anchoring near us in these conditions.

Not much was done on boat today; a short yoga session, dishes and a lot of recreational reading.

