

Aboard Sengo



Leaving Gladstone...

...and heading South

...eventually

**LADY MUSGRAVE
ISLAND**

From Page 16

**ENCOUNTERING THE
LOCALS**

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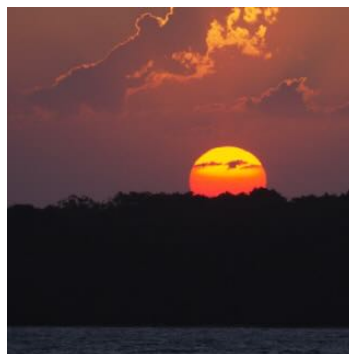
**AN OVERNIGHT
HITCHHIKER**

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We finally started moving bigger distances in October. But it was, in essence, all with the aim of heading south! And it whilst it wasn't rushed, we weren't dawdling. We have a southern destination booked for Christmas so, given the crazy weather patterns and having to take the opportunities when they arose, there hasn't been a huge amount of time to relax. However, it didn't stop us enjoying the down time when the wind wasn't blowing.

With the Referendum over there was only one other commitment we had scheduled in before Christmas. But that wasn't going to happen in October. The goal point for the end of October was to get to the Gold Coast. And we made it! We started the month in Colosseum Inlet just south of Gladstone. We finished the month in the very familiar Tiger Mullet Channel on the Gold Coast.

In between we visited Lady Musgrave Island, managed a bit of socialising (including with a boat we haven't seen since Fremantle in early 2018), and had an interesting interaction with a dingo!



Colosseum Inlet to Gladstone

1st October 2023. I got up around 0500. To wake myself mentally up I completed my now usual Wordle, Quordle, Octordle and Blossom. After these, (I find they are getting harder; tempting one to wonder if there is a way to choose the system - but then, what would be the point), where my concentration had been focussed, and now wasn't, I noticed there was a slightly strange noise - that occasionally repeated itself. It was very subtle. For some reason I thought of the bilge pump. Surely not! Regardless, I looked into the bilge. Yup. There was water in there. I didn't panic as there could have been a couple of reasons for this. But most importantly, I knew, we weren't sinking. I closed the hatch again. Andrew has longer arms...he can get the water out later this morning.

Having aborted last night's plans to start the spade cover (the one which had disintegrated in the fire last month), I now put the sewing machine up on our lounge table and turned it on. The display looked a bit odd. I pressed a button. And nothing happened! I got the feeling I was trying to depress the toggle button through sandy grit. I tried the other two buttons, toggling them enough to lower down the resistance. But the display was still odd. For a few moments it didn't change, and my pressing a button to instruct the machine to change stitches had no effect. And then it affected everything! Instead of the display jumping up one stitch program with each depression, the digital display was cycling through all the options. Something is definitely not right. Clearly this job is not going to happen today. I packed the machine away again.

To get out of Colosseum Inlet we had to cross the bar again, so we needed to time our departure. The anchor was up at 0800.

We were officially over the bar at 0900, and we put the genoa out as we turned north toward Gladstone shortly afterward. Whilst the wind was steady we stripped some of the line from the base of the furler: when the rigger



had reinstalled it he hadn't left enough of it to get to the port winch.

We tried calling the marina to see if there was a mooring free but the office was unoccupied. It was Sunday after all, and there are usually only two staff members rostered on. It was also the time when one of them would be running the shopping bus. So the question was: do we turn into the marina area to see if there is a mooring free, or do we just find an anchorage spot outside? We turned into the marina. One mooring was free. We were secured to the mooring at 1100.



I spent the next short while searching the Lincraft and Spotlight websites for a 'cheap' sewing machine. At this stage I didn't want the stress of hand sewing the spade bag, but I knew that getting the sewing machine serviced here was probably going to take time we didn't want to spend hanging around, (pity, I hadn't got on to this project earlier), *and* was likely to cost more than an inexpensive machine. Of the choices, the 'cheap' machines did indeed look 'cheap', and none of them had great internet reviews. There were however some potential options for the next level up. Lincraft and Spotlight stock different brands, and, had I chosen one from Lincraft, I could have picked it up today. However, there was a model at Spotlight which was on sale which looked like it would do the job. It was simple; but I only wanted simple. I rang them to get them to put one aside. And then confirmed they would be open tomorrow (public holiday). I also mentioned they had it on special. Oh, what price is it listed as?, the lass asked me. At the time I thought that question was a bit odd.

We got off boat at 1300. We didn't log into the marina until around 1500...staff were off picking up their shoppers; so it wasn't until after a Woolies shop, when we got back to the marina, that we officially logged in. We payed for three days; we would be staying at least that long. We were back on boat around 1530. We spent the rest of the afternoon reading.

Birds: Bar-shouldered dove, Blue-faced honeyeater (heard), Forest Kingfisher, White Ibis, Mudlark, Silver Gull, Willy Wagtail, Common Myna.

2nd October 2023. I woke around 0500 to a short bout of rain. According to WIndy.com it wasn't expected. My first thought was to rescue the items hanging on the line...but didn't. They included a rag, a cleaning cloth, and a towel full of coal dust that I had been using to wash the boat. The rain put a dampener on me doing any more deck washing, but the towel would dry. Perhaps I would get back to the deck this afternoon. I got up for the day at 0600.

We walked to Spotlight this morning to pick up the new sewing machine. The special price, it seems, had ended yesterday, which I found out when checking the website for the warranty information. I discovered this because the sales lass asked me, before tilling up the price, whether I wanted to extend the warranty? Fortunately I had mentioned the price yesterday, and they had written it on the machine. So I got the machine with the extra warranty (which will really only cost me \$5 because it included a \$15 voucher... which no doubt will be used for the next project) for less than the cost of the service of my old machine (confirmed by a chat to a lass in a bag store later). Now I just have to find somewhere to store it!

From Spotlight we walked to Kin Kora, treated ourselves to a break at the cafe, and snooped around BigW, coming out with some small bits and pieces. Andrew got a professional haircut, and finally, we did our food shopping. We had asked the marina if we could be picked up in the usual shopping bus, but as it turned out we were the only ones requiring a lift. We got picked up in the ute.

Birds: Blue-faced Honeyeater (heard), Mudlark, White Ibis, Lapwing and Andrew spotted a Fig-bird



Barney Point

3rd October 2023. I got up at 0520. I played some word games on the computer and then boiled some eggs for lunch. Unlike

yesterday's delightful blue morning sky, at 0630 this morning the sky was mostly grey, overcast, and there was some rain falling to the south of us.

At 0705 it rained on us; not that the rain radar on the [bom.gov.au](https://www.bom.gov.au) App showed much. The rain radar on the website showed more. The shower was brief.

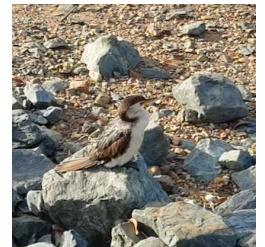
We started walking from the marina at 0905. Today's task was to vote in the Referendum. Once that was completed, (after a comedy of errors inside the temporary electoral office) we had a few choices. Originally I had thought of going to the Regional Art Gallery and Museum but cancelled that with a preference to go to the health food shop (I was looking for some broth that I use as stock and you can't get it at the common supermarkets). From the temporary electoral office it was another twenty-plus minute walk, and I chose a new route, along a road with predominantly old 'Queenslanders' lining the street. Some were well looked after; others were well overdue for a lot of love and instauration. After the health food shop I took a quick look in the nearby secondhand bookshop, but it didn't bear fruit (if we were still looking at learning Spanish I would have hit the jackpot but as we have changed the next challenge to Italian, I found there were no Italian resources), and a cuppa back at the health food shop turned into a smoothie.

Turning into Coon Street we followed the road east, past the Mantra, where we have had dinner before (with **Anapa** some years ago), then along the Port Curtis Foreshore



Centenary Trail. Squiggling along some roads we came to Barney Point Beach, where we ate our boiled eggs whilst watching the frisky and white-capped waves hit the shore. Leaving this popular picnic area we followed Young Street to Talooa St, squiggled again around some minor roads, and headed back toward Auckland Creek down Goondoon St. We were back on boat at 1330.

Birds: Channel-billed cuckoo (heard before we got off boat but saw one on shore), Brown Honeyeater, Noisy Miner, Lapwing, Mudlark, White Ibis, Straw-necked Ibis, Fig Bird, Blue-faced Honeyeater



Round Hill Lookout

4th October 2023. Given the forecast rain for the 1000 tranche I really wanted to start walking early. Like 0700 early! Clearly the emphasis hadn't been enough because Andrew's acceptance of that was non-existent; he was still in bed at that time. But it didn't matter; it was drizzling outside anyway, and Andrew, if he doesn't have to, doesn't start walking in the rain. At around 0730 the rain got heavier and I wondered whether we would get a walk in today at all.

But the rain did stop. And we did get our walk, leaving the marina at around 0925.

AllTrails, on its general map of the 'green' zone we were headed to, has distinct bike symbols that would, to me, signify a mountain bike track, even though the tracks we took are not listed as an AllTrails route. And whilst there was the occasional track around locked fences in the park we traversed, it really didn't seem that the tracks we used, when we found them, had been used regularly by anything recently. Some were even more faint to follow than the mountain bike track we had followed on Curtis Island on 20th September 2023.

The route we took to Round Hill Lookout over these tracks through the Glenlyon Environmental Reserve was 'undulating' to 'up.' It was also very dry, although after this morning's downpour, had a distinct 'forest' smell about it. There was some birdsong but we were more concerned with looking down than up; snakes on the ground being a priority (I only saw a couple of lizards), *and*, actually following what used to be the track (there were a couple of missed starts).

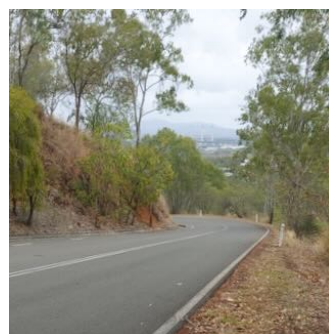
Getting to one knoll we discovered a bike track to a flat lookout had been truncated by a private house, and the road/track to it was blocked at the other end by a large Water Board water tank (the second



we had seen). We weaved our way along pushed down grass, faint though it was, and dirt tracks, completing the last ascent to the Round Hill Lookout along the main road. After a break (lunch of pumpkin muffins that I had made last night), and encircling the peak, we made our way back to boat, taking a short steep track to the access road to the second seen water tank, and then a dirt, undulating track, along the eastern edge of the park, adjacent to Glenlyon Road.

We got back to the marina around 1330 where we caught up with **Vagabond** over a cuppa and then, after a shower, we caught up with **Cat Magic**. We were back on Sengo for the rest of the night around 1745.

Bird list. Magpie, Mudlark, Rainbow Lorikeets, Scaley-breasted Lorikeet?, Galah, White Ibis, Chough, Collard Kingfisher, White-faced Heron, Silver Gull, Peaceful Dove, Brown Honeyeater, Gangster (Striated Heron) (on boat), Welcome Swallow.



Regional Art Gallery and Museum

5th October 2023. I was up at 0315. But I had gone to bed at 1930! I read a bit..(finished a novel I was reading, read some more historical observations of the peoples of the Kimberley written in the early 20th Century, and read the instruction manual for the new sewing machine), did the dishes, and played with the usual word games on the internet.

At 0758 it was drizzling. It may have been drizzling earlier but I hadn't been taking any notice.

We finally got to the Regional Art Gallery and Museum today. What a disappointment that was. The room to the right as you enter had some art but was designed as a relaxing room. The room to the left had an exhibition focussed on local personalities. And the rest of the facility was closed because they were setting up for a big art exhibition that was opening in a week or so. Andrew isn't into reading about people so he bailed. I started, because sometimes an individual's history includes history of the places they have stayed, but I soon gave up. The exhibits of individuals were blurbs framed in large picture frames upon the wall; written in what seemed to be 12 font! (It may have been bigger but not much) and placed above my head height ensuring a sore neck. I could be cynical and suggest that the staff are acting as a fifth column with links to the local chiropractors. I gave up on the history of the second individual and went to report to the staff. They seemed interested, but who knows if anything was done. It has been about 30 years since I studied how to present information to the public (Grad Cert in Environmental and Heritage Interpretation so I can note with some knowledge). Techniques may have changed, but I very much doubt they have gone backwards!



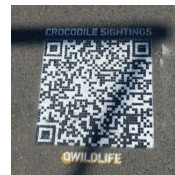
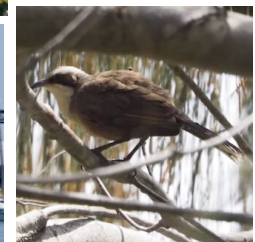
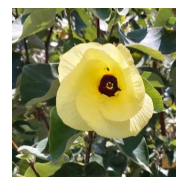
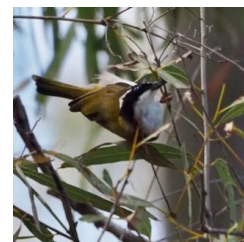
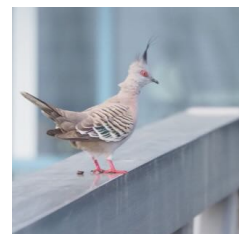
6th October 2023. I wanted a walk. Andrew had the option of coming with me or not; he chose the former. It was planned to be a decent length, just that it would be flat: Gladstone Marina to Spinnaker Park, and back, and then Gladstone Marina to the end of East Shores and back.

The weather was delightful. There had been some steady rain overnight but it all seemed to have cleared up by the time we got up at 0615. This was much more convenient than the original predicted time for the rain: 15 plus mm concentrating around the 0700 tranche. By the time we started walking it was around 0935. Given the rain, I think the birds were encouraged to frolic well past the usual time; reprising much of their daily dawn chorus.

We stopped for an apple break at the seating under the marina shelter (met two lovely tan cocker spaniels), and then had lunch at Auckland House (brewery) at East Shore.

Birds: heron/bittern (?), Mudlark, Willy Wagtail, Pied Butcherbird, Lapwings (including the nesting individual in a car park mentioned last month), Brown Honeyeater, Little Friarbird, ? Honeyeater, White Ibis, Grey Crowned Babbler (I love these birds so definitely the spot of the day), Peaceful Dove, Crested Pigeon, (? Sp) Egret, Silver Gull, Sparrow, Welcome Swallow. Craven, Pied Oystercatcher.

Dolphins were seen at two places, and a turtle popped its head up in Auckland Creek. There were lots of dogs out for a walk with their owners (including some very interesting/strange mix of breeds).



The spade cover - not pretty but it will do the job! Now it can back in the bilge as dunnage for the other stuff we store in there.



7th October 2023. It was due to get windy this morning and we were originally expecting not to get off boat, but I had noticed **Pipon** had arrived in the marina yesterday so I arranged a pre-breakfast cuppa with them on shore. Once back on boat I spent the day reading, and washing. We saw 23 knots True on the gauges. Gladstone actually recorded higher than that.



Bathurst

8th October 2023. We slept until around 0700 and then rolled into our usual morning routine of breakfast and Brexit. The actual Bathurst car race started at 1015 but the telecast started earlier. Andrew settled in for the day a little earlier than that.

I made my way, with various bits and pieces, to the back cockpit, moving the under-repair fender and setting-up the new sewing machine in its place for a new shopping trolley bag. I had most of the job done by lunch time. After lunch I put a velcro hold on the back of the bag, and clips down the bottom so the bag could be secured to the external frame. I finished the job around 1500.



Lunch was pancakes with chicken and cheese.

The rest of the afternoon was spent washing and reading.

We saw 26 knots on the gauges.



Out towards the Reef

Gladstone to Facing Island

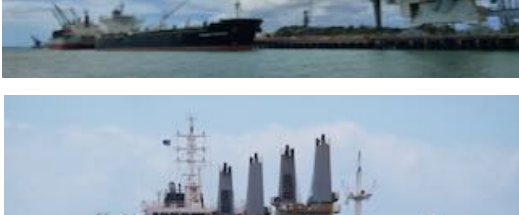
9th October 2023. The alarm was on for 0630 but I woke up, and got up, earlier. Whilst Andrew was making his way out of bed, I played the now habitual Wordle and Quordle. At around 0700 we dropped the tinnie for the final trip to Gladstone's shores this year (we hoped), and after dropping off rubbish, recycling, and books, we headed across to Flavours (cafe). We met **S** for breakfast and had a delightful catchup, before he headed off to work, and we headed back to boat.

Once the tinnie was tied to Sengo's stern it was just a matter of turning the engines on and dropping the mooring lines before we left: we had conducted all other travel preparations last night and early this morning

The wind started out as 10 knots, got to 15 as we exited Auckland Creek, and shot up to around 20 as we turned into the main shipping channel. But it was essentially on the nose, so there was no prospect of sailing. The anchor was down at our last Facing Island anchorage, after passing an anchored ship, at 1055 ('got to love a ship named after a bird')!

My first job, after settling, was a water wipe down of the clears outside. The second boat job would have been messier had I started it, but I noted on our emails two insurance issues (land based, not boat based) which had to be attended to, one of which was imperative. It took me a good hour to sort that out, and stop a panic. By the time I had focussed on lunch and made muffins it was 1430.

We read for the rest of the day. Whilst we have suffered more further south from here, the waves did get a bit rocky as wind went from the south-east to north-east. I am pleased to say, despite limited exposure to rocky seas in close to two months, I did not get virescent. Fortunately, conditions settled down into the evening



Facing Island to Mast Head Island

10 October 2023. We were up at 0640. It was raining. We had been planning for a 0700 departure but we left a bit later. The anchor was up and mainsail raised at 0730. At 0745 we entered the channel below Facing Island. We exited the channel to the east side of Facing Island at 0830.

Our run line toward Mast Head Island went through several anchored ships. Marinetraffic.com indicated wind speeds may be around 15 knots at those vessels; we, on the other hand, were only seeing wind speeds of around 6 knots.

At 0920 we finally turned one engine off. The second engine went off briefly and then got turned on again. It was turned off for a longer period of time at 0955. And the kinetic motion of movement through the water was finally enjoyable.

After our memorial to the north of Mast Head, we turned into the wind a bit more. But, given the time, we were never going to make Heron Island comfortably with this wind angle in the light of day. And as far as we could tell the mooring at Heron was taken. 'By a boat we knew. And because we knew that boat was travelling with another boat, we suspected the mooring at Wistari Reef was taken as well. So we turned further south, zig-zagging our way toward the mooring at Mast Head Island. We knew it was likely to be rocky, given the expected wind angle, but we have survived 'rock' here before. After several tacks, the sails were dropped at 1410. The Mooring was picked up at 1425. The extended mooring lines set and the kettle on at 1430.

Our boat speed during the day (under sail) ranged (on average) from under 5 knots to 8 knots.

Birds: Several flocks of black birds skimming across the water. Some were noddies (assume Black). Terns and noddies were on the sandbank at low tide toward Mast Head Island when we stopped. They moved as the tide rose.

We had started today's trip in the rain and as that cleared up we found we were heading toward more rain out to sea. The day however ended in lovely sunshine (although there was still damp weather to our north).



Mast Head Island to Wistari Reef

Choices

11th October 2023. We had a choice today. We could sail directly from Mast Head Island to Lady Musgrave Island, to be greeted in the afternoon with a head-on SE wind predicted to blow 15 to 20 knots, or, we could take a short sail across to Heron Island and either pick up a mooring, or anchor north of Wistari Reef and be comfortably protected from the stronger winds (hopefully), and then use the lighter, better angled, wind to get to Lady Musgrave Island tomorrow. We chose the latter.

The sun was well and truly up when I got up at 0615. Noddies were heading out to sea. The mono that had anchored to our west last night was still behind us. There was little wind... 5 knots True with a light swell, the latter from the north east.

We spent the morning reading, mainly. I checked for the final leaks in the fender under repair (repeated attempts to fix it have stultified any integrity of the original patches), and scoured the kitchen sink plughole for stuck food (such a mucky job). By 0900 it was blowing a reasonably steady 8 to 9 knots True. We could sail in that. After a final morning coffee we moved on.

The mooring line was dropped at 1000. The main sail was up at 1006 (after motoring away from reef so we didn't run into it) and the genoa was out and the engines off at 1010. At this stage the True wind speed was around 10 knots.

The genoa was looking a bit creased so we took advantage of the steady winds to fiddle with the deck ropes and tighten the genoa halyard. We used the cleat belonging to the



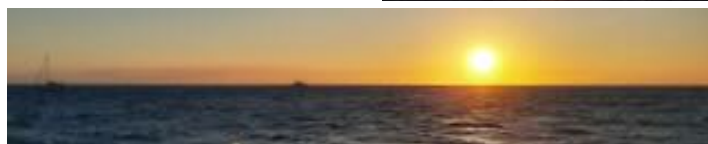
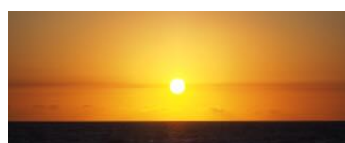
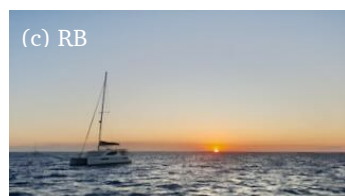
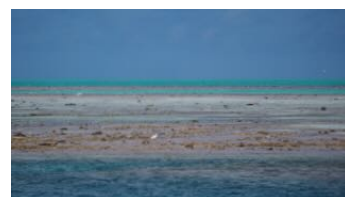
First Reef. The first reef line had a fraying end..it took a bit of tape to get it back where it belonged (and then a hot knife to tidy it up later).

The highest boat speed noted today was 9.5 knots but SOG was generally less than that. Assuming the boats occupying the moorings had moved on (we knew their vague plans) we thought we would secure ourselves to the Heron Island mooring. Failing that we would try for the Wistari Reef mooring. Failing that we would anchor to the east of the Wistari Reef Mooring. The Heron Island mooring was occupied when we turned up (although it did become available later in the afternoon). The anchoring spot to the east of the Wistari Reef mooring was occupied (by a boat we knew). The Wistari Reef mooring however was free. We attached to it at 1155.

The SE winds got up to 22.9 knots overnight and because we were on a mooring it wasn't exactly a smooth ride. A small boat (that had been to our west last night) had anchored behind us, but then moved closer to the reef for a bit more protection.

Birds seen during transit: noddies, terns and a sea eagle

Birds seen on and around reef on arrival: reef herons, noddies.



Lady Musgrave Island

12th October 2023. I was actually up at 0520 but I let Andrew sleep in a little, filling in the time before he got up by putting the dishes away and securing the boat. We had a cuppa to wake up (which may or may not be an adjuvant) and allowed ourselves one Brexit YouTube posting before we got going.

The mooring was dropped at 0615. The main sail was up at 0625. The genoa out and the engines off as we exited the south end of the channel between Wistari Reef and Heron Reef. It was around 0655.

The wind today was in a reasonable direction, and to start with it had reasonable strength, so that whilst I knew we were going to need a few tacks to get to our destination, our timing was looking really good, even with the extra distance because of the wind angle. But then the wind strength dropped, and therefore, so did our speed.

Although the day was still relatively young, we ended up dropping the sails at 1430. There was no way at this time that we were going to reach Lady Musgrave Lagoon by 1530 if we had not, and my fear was that if our 'normal' anchoring spot was occupied we would need to find an alternative, a task that really needed to be done whilst the sun was still high enough to spot reef or bommies under the water's surface.

We entered the channel for the Lady Musgrave Lagoon at 1530 but we needn't have worried about finding a new spot....there were no boats near our usual anchoring position, the one that was earlier noted on AIS having left sometime beforehand. The anchor was down at 1550.

It had been a long day and whilst I was happy enough to wave at a tender crossing our path as we motored in, I was definitely a bit brusque with a fellow in a Hobie kayak who came across to say hello as we were taking the front cockpit covers off. The poor fellow tried a conversation and got basic quick answers. He asked where we came from. Heron. Heading South? Yup. If I see him again I will apologise... I didn't notice which boat he paddled back to.



We had a short break before Andrew got on with a chicken vegie mix for dinner, and I restrung some hatch covers with new elastic. I was surprised to see only 15 boats anchored here overnight.

Birds. There were no herons spotted this morning: Wistari Reef was near high tide and therefore offered nowhere to land, and Heron Island was too far away to note. We did see noddies over the water however; firstly in singles, and later in the day, in flocks. We also noted brown boobies, in pairs, and triples as we got closer to Lady Musgrave Island. Brown Boobies are fabulous looking birds and I cant wait for good light tomorrow to see the blue water reflected onto their stomachs. I am hoping sometime over the next few days that I get a photo of this.

13th October 2023. Friday. I beat the sun up. At 0510. Just. So did the terns foraging over the lagoon. I spent some time on tidying the previous October notes; there was no option for computer word games as there is no (easy) internet reception here. Andrew got up around 0615.

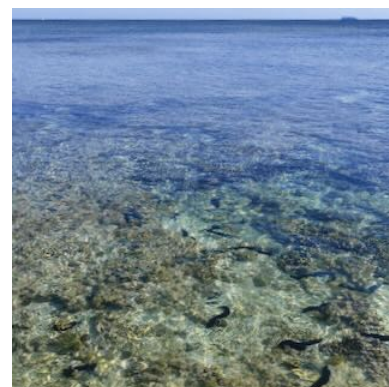
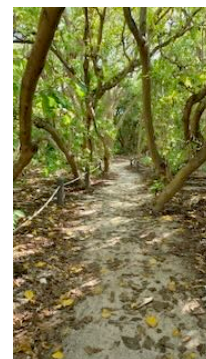
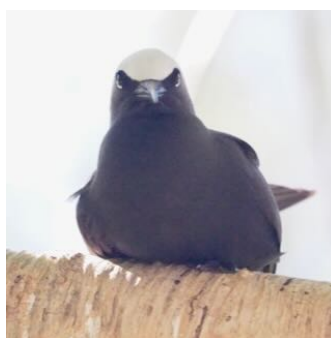
During the day I got two paddles on my board, both were short, and I was getting a bit wobbly at the second one, but being a bit of a pollyanna (for the positive) I am certain I will get better at staying standing with each time I try.

We finally got to shore for a walk; thankfully the tinnie engine worked, although it did threaten revolt. What is it about this place and our tinnie engine? It was an afternoon exercise and we left Sengo at 1500. We were on shore and walking at 1515. The route taken was through the island, round the western end and back through the island to avoid the increasing wind on the north side. Andrew is not fond of this route as it is usually very smelly due to thousands of breeding birds. But we seem to be at the start of the breeding/nesting season and there was hardly any smell. No obvious terns, no obvious shearwaters. And we didn't see silvereye. We did see nesting noddies, running rails, soaring silver gulls, brown boobies and a tattler.

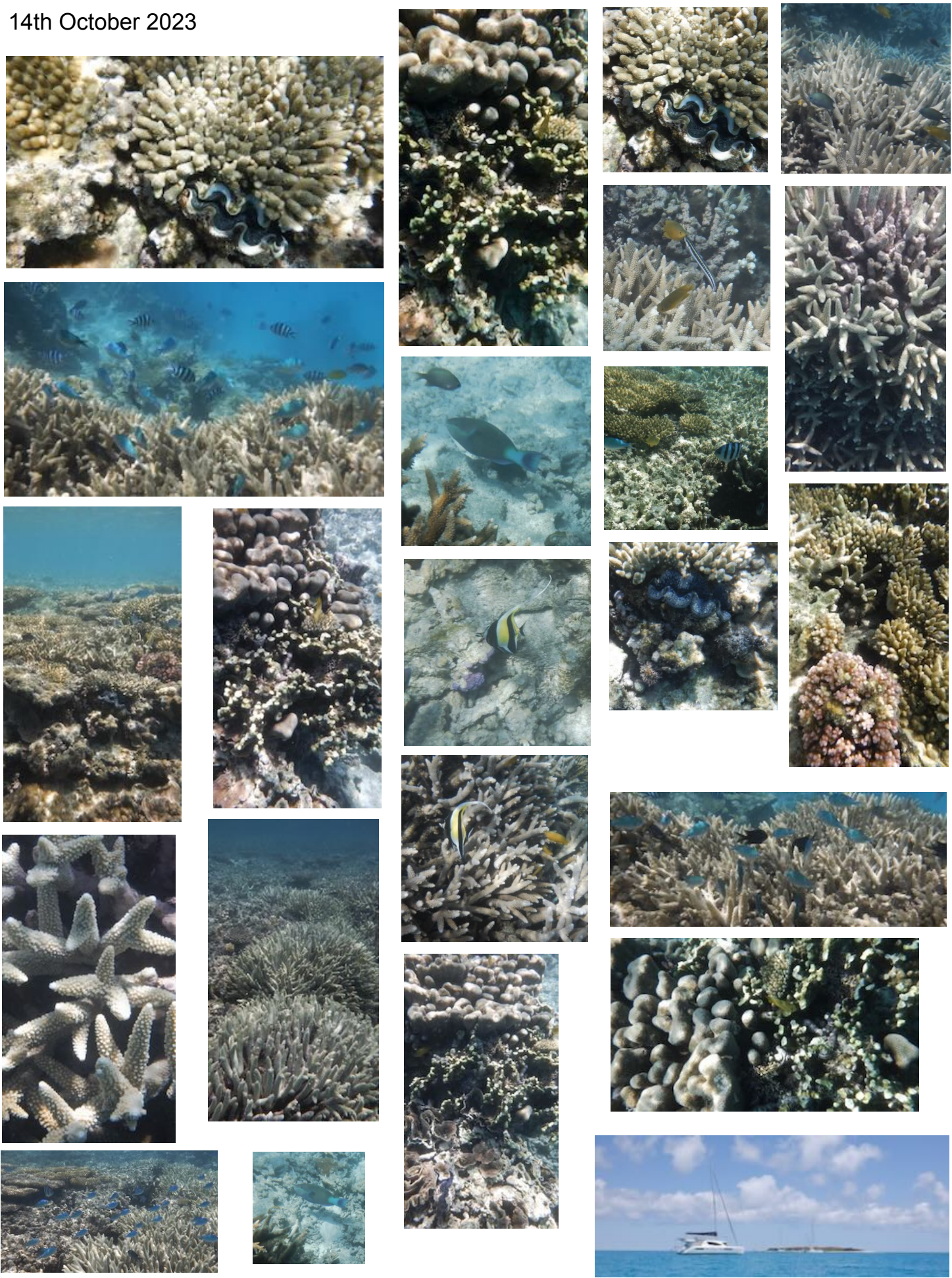
We also noted in the water sea slugs, a black tipped reef shark, and turtles.

Because it was particularly windy, we were splashed with the surf on the way back to boat. We had gained a couple of neighbours during the day. The overnight boat count was now 21, including one possible on the outside of the reef to the south

The highest wind gust seen was 17.7 knots on the gauges - but it probably blew higher.

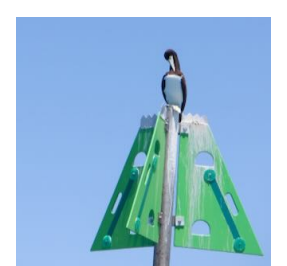
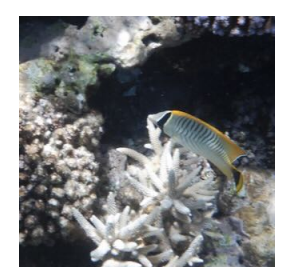
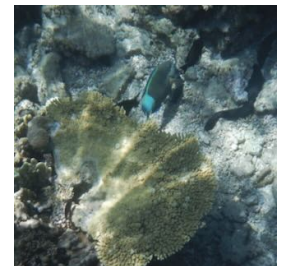


14th October 2023



15th October 2023. Bright sun. No wind. Hot. I had a couple of minutes before a scheduled weather report so I put the back blinds up. By the time I got the radio on, on the dot of 0640, the scan picked up a log-on for Bundaberg on Channel 81. The signal was too powerful and knocked out the weather on the cycle from Round Hill. I didn't realise at the time that I should have just set the radio Channel for 82. Damn!

We got a walk around the island again this morning, I also got another snorkel, convincing Andrew to be my tinie skipper. And we even got out on the paddle boards, Andrew only for a few minutes. As far as we could tell at the time there was only one tiny leak left on his board. Unfortunately after a few minutes on deck his board had another catastrophic burst - along the seam - this time we are thinking of getting rid of it. Whether he gets another one or whether I am the only one to enjoy a board from now on is yet to be seen. These boards are expensive; pity we can't get a subvention from the manufacturer to replace the one we have got because we haven't used it much!





Lady Musgrave Island to Burnett Heads

16th October 2023. The alarm was on for 0530 but we got up a bit before that. We were out the entrance channel at 0600. It took us 30 minutes to put the spinnaker up and of course, just as it was raised, the wind dropped! At around 0900 we were travelling at 4.7 knots - in slightly the wrong direction!

We had started heading south west, but turned off the rum line to south east to get better speed. During the day the wind fluctuated direction and strength and we gained some heading, and eventually crossed rum line heading in the right direction, having gybed at 0920 to get back to our required sailing angle.

When the apparent wind got to 12 knots we dropped the spinnaker and put out the genoa. Wind speeds during the day got up to 23 knots True.

At 1550 we furled in the genoa and motored along the shipping channel and then upstream along the Burnett River. A flock of boobies flew past to the north and of course little pied cormorants were everywhere - acting as sentinels on the lateral marks. We didn't see any gannets on the traverse upstream, but we did see dolphins.

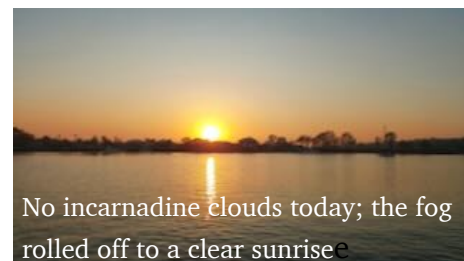
We rarely go into marinas and we definitely rarely even contemplate this one; the current of the river is enough to give me the 'geebies' if a pen is considered; hence our preference for an end berth. But today, even if we had wanted a berth I doubt we would have got one. There was constant chatter on the radio with Bundaberg VMR and the Bundaberg Port Marina. The chart plotter showed a steady line of boats coming from east - ish. It seems there was at least one overseas rally coming in - each boat waiting to be quarantine checked and penned - hopefully before tomorrow's rough weather!

The anchor was down, near our usual spot, upstream of the Sugar Sheds at 1640. Given the expected southerly blow coming up, the anchorage wasn't as full as I expected it to be. To be sure, I put 55 m of chain out.



Burnett Heads

17th October 2023. Believe it or not, at around 0415 (!) there were bush birds singing in amongst the houses this morning. I was up at that time to stretch out my back - little walking over the past few days, and a sailing day haven't done it all that good, although I actually remembered a pillow for the helm seat this time, minimising the damage. I was reading in the living area when I thought I heard voices. The cat next to us was leaving - at 0430! I assumed they were heading north. Whilst the predictions were to be for north winds at this hour, the strong southerly change was coming in a few hours and I thought no one in their right mind would be battling in to that. I was wrong - when I checked marine [traffic.com](https://www.traffic.com) this boat was heading south! Crazy.



I checked marine traffic and one of the two boats that was in front of us yesterday was still sailing, although it was near the bottom of Hervey Bay. Whilst the overnight sail would not have been comfortable (if they stop at the southern end of the bay they will have been going for around twenty four hours), I can see merit in the journey. The strong winds and their direction according to predictions are going to keep us here for probably around a week; if you are in the bottom of Hervey Bay you can make your way south in those winds (albeit under motor) and get yourself to the next big hurdle in a couple of days; the Wide Bay Bar. The scenery is also a bit nicer down south, compared to here. For the moment however, where we can, we are trying to stick to day sails so the big trip wasn't considered. We will also need to stock up on food in a few days. Whilst it would be possible to do it at Tin Can Bay, Burnett Heads is a convenient choice (when the weather is conducive to the tinnie ride from our anchorage to the public boat ramp).

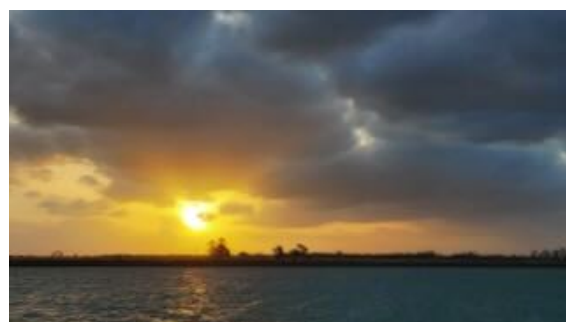
I could hear swallows on the boat just before 0500 - just as it was getting light. There was no wind. Fog lay above the ground to our north. Smoke haze intertwined with it and surrounded us. There was apparently a rather nasty fire to our north - the township of Baffle Creek (where we have not been) was given emergency notice yesterday.

Sea eagles clucked to the south east and a pigeon call - a call that I should have known - pierced the smoke

Andrew got up a little after 0700. Whilst I was making pumpkin muffins for breakfast, he fixed the zip to the outside of the back cockpit, which had split yesterday. A few modifications means we will have to be gentle opening the back door but at least we can close it against the wind.

At 0730 the wind was up to around 18 knots True, whitecaps were coming up the river (from south to north) and we had started the Burnett River pirouette.

The highest gust for the day was 27.8 knots



18th October 2023. Again the highest gust today on our gauges was over 27 knots. I did some washing, published September's newsletter, kept reading *Jungle of Stone*, made veggie soup for lunch, and tofu and broccoli for dinner. (The tofu was a rescue job - the packet had been opened and I wanted to use the remaining product before it went off and became sericeous or slimy) I also managed to wipe a bit of obvious dirt off the deck.



Two boats came into the anchorage and anchored either side of us mid afternoon - at respectful distances

19th October 2023. We were up at around 0600. The sun was up. Bush birds were calling from shore. Vehicle traffic could also be heard from shore. The wind seemed benign but there was enough breeze to flap the towels drying on the back washing lines

The rest of the day consisted (for me) of washing the rest of washing pile (mostly towels), reading, and a snooze. We had an unexpected social event with a nearby boat coming over to introduce himself. A pleasant afternoon coffee was enjoyed.

20th October 2023. A simple but productive day. When we got to shore in the morning we got around a 45 minute walk (not quite enough to get to the marina and back to drop off some books), caught up with **Annecam**, went food shopping, and when back on boat caught up again with our new neighbour. We finished the day reading.



It's not only birds that we get landing on boat!

Burnett Heads to Big Woody Island

21st October 2023. The alarm was on for 0530 but we were already up. At 0600 we had started our usual sailing day praxis; the anchor had been lifted, the main was up, and Andrew was chocking the anchor. By 0620 I had retrieved the bridle (it fell off again), we had had breakfast, and we were exiting the channel at Burnett Heads.

The True wind speed wasn't much but hopefully we could sail into it. It was blowing 12 knots when we exited the channel but as has been the norm recently, as we turned toward our destination (in this case south east), the wind speed dropped.

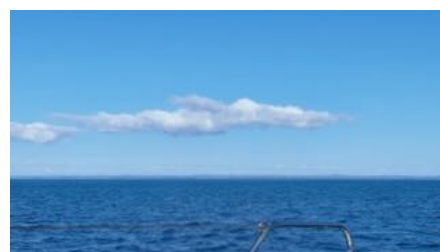
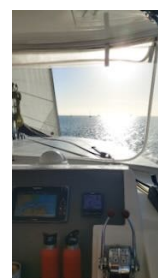
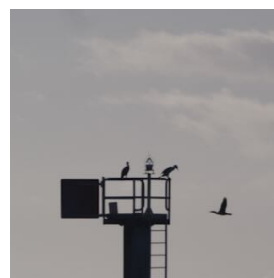
We took several tacks and by 1130 our track looked parallel to our rum line. Apart from one vessel early on in the morning, nobody else seemed to be purely sailing - there was no way that the other boats on marine traffic (apart for those purely under motor) could be following the rum line to the fairway boy so accurately.

At 1200 I had a snooze, and was awoken by an engine going on at 1245. There was now no wind. I got up and put the kettle on; nothing like a cuppa to help contemplate the next move. We were, at this point, 10nm to the fairway buoy, and 13nm to the bottom on Big Woody Island. With one engine on and no wind we headed the boat to the Goto point at the fairway buoy.

Finally the wind changed and got a bit stronger. The north-east wind was now from behind us (it was south-west when I had gone to snooze 46 min before). Of course the forecast had little wind in this tranche anyway, so we shouldn't have been surprised. And we knew that there was less wind further off the coast - we had ended up in the middle of Hervey Bay using long runs rather than tacking close to the east mainland shore.

A whale boat chatted at 1253 on the radio. Apparently a couple of pods are still here!

At 1315 we changed direction, angling south a bit toward the rum line where we could see there was wind. Some. Slowly, over the next half hour, I angled toward the Goto point as the wind slowly increased, but because it was behind us it was not strong enough to sail the boat on its own.

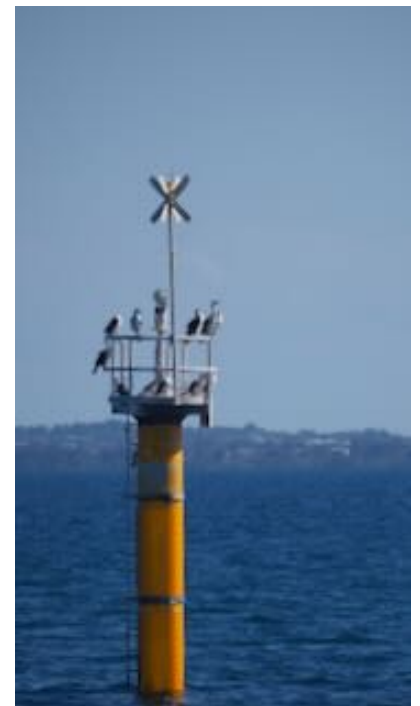




We weaved our way slowly south, between crab pot runs, and passing several groups of foraging birds. The whale watching boats were still talking to each other. Several pods were spotted. We didn't see any

The single engine that was on, was turned off at 1445 just as we passed the Fairway Buoy. True wind speed was around 9 knots. Speed Over Ground around 6 knots!

An engine went back on at 1610 for 25 minutes. Sails were eventually dropped at 1730. Anchor was down at our anchor mark at Big Woody Island at 1755. The bridle was retrieved and loaded at 1800. Sunset had been at 1758!



Through the Sandy Straits to near the Wide Bay Bar - via Kingfisher Bay

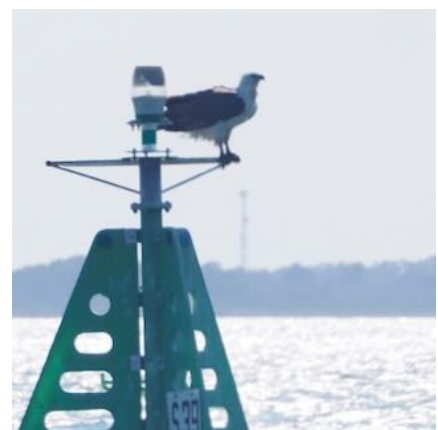
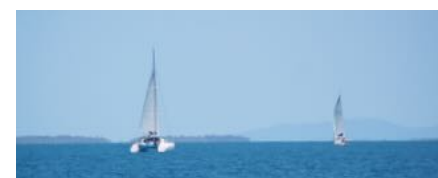
22nd October 2023. The anchor was up at 0750. The idea had been, in order to fill in time before coordinating our traverse across the shallow bits and Boonlye Point, to stop at Kingfisher Bay and go for a walk. In theory we had a couple of hours and could have easily walked the circuit that encompasses the beach and back via the Z Force ruins. But we got distracted. In the nicest possible way.

As we were coming into anchor we were hailed by the boat just to our north. This boat is **Blessing**. I had seen Blessing on AIS some days ago and wondered whether it was the same **Blessing** that we had travelled with through some of the Kimberley. Yes, indeed it was. And they were hailing us. So instead of our walk, we picked them up and we all had a cuppa at the small general store on shore. We had to go to the general store, for at that time of the morning, neither the Jetty Bar or the Sand Bar restaurant were open. It was a delightful catchup and it reminded me how much I had missed them. We haven't seen them since early 2018 - and that was on the other side of the Country! By the time we had called quits to socialising (due to the required timing for the Sheidan Flats crossing, not because we didn't want to spend anymore time with them) the wind was blowing north west. This put our boats on a lee shore and with a long fetch it was a slightly wet ride back to boat (Blessing didn't care; the owners swam back to boat).

Our anchor was up at 1120. It seemed as if everybody else had the same idea; Sengo was the second last boat to leave the anchorage and head south. We put the genoa out and a couple of minutes later turned the engines off. We were travelling at 3.5 to 4.5 knots with a True wind speed of 10 knots. Admittedly it wasn't fast - we were overtaken by a mono!

Rather than take the inside line as other boats had around the shallow bit to the south of Mackenzie's Jetty, I took the outside to try to get a better wind angle, and hopefully better speed. It didn't work and I found us dropping further and further behind the pack - not that it is a race!

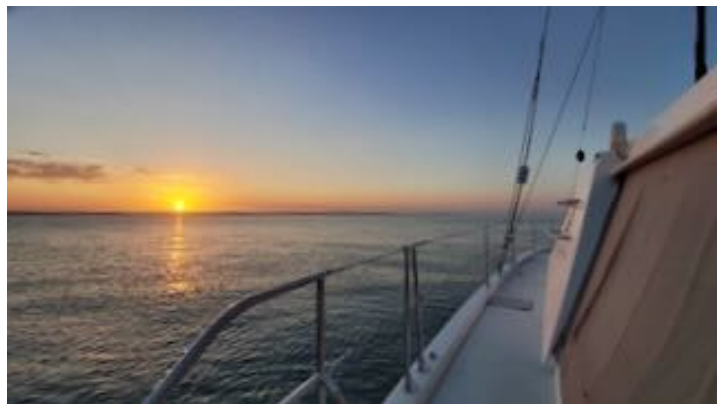
Eventually we got to where we expected to anchor for the night - but it was, as we had been warned by **Blessing** as they took a shortcut from the main channel and travelled through it, very rolly. They had been heading for Pelican Bay - everybody's



usual anchorage at Inskip Point. However they found a better spot at the base of K'gari, near the vehicle ferry. We decided to join them but Andrew noticed a small swell coming from the bar so we took a compromise, ending up near the boat ramp and some campers on the beach at Coolooloi campground.

At this point we were still considering crossing the Wide Bay Bar tomorrow afternoon, but the predicted weather looked a bit too complicated to take in. After a couple of SBS On Demand series episodes I got to making pumpkin muffins, just in case we did leave tomorrow. Andrew checked the weather again. Conditions looked better for a Tuesday exit. The only thing we needed to be aware of was the swell

Birds. Beach curlew (beach near Kingfisher Resort), Little Pied Cormorants, Pied Oystercatcher, Terns (sp?), shore birds on a sand bank during the traverse south (too far away to identify).



K'Gari

23 October 2023. I must have been snoozing. The ping of a text message prompted my eyes open at 0600. The sun was out. Surprisingly, no wind. Bush birds called from shore, but the only obvious known calls were a willy wagtail and a craven. The campers were quiet.



The wind, when it did come up, was more north west than predicted. This turned out to be particularly uncomfortable when it combined a side-on-swell with an incoming tide to push us within a few meters of the sandy shore. And whilst the wind was due to later turn north-east and get stronger, which would have pushed us away from shore, it was time to think of alternatives.



One lot of campers had left. Another lot had arrived (although this crowd was big and was possibly only a day trip). In between campground occupations a dingo, probably the beast **Blessing** had told us about yesterday afternoon, wandered into camp to see what he could find.



At around 1200 we moved. Ironically to where **Blessing** had been yesterday..it was definitely calmer at the moment here than where we had been...and we weren't riding up on to the beach, as we had been an hour before. The fact that we could escape 25-plus tourists who had turned up at the camp ground was also a bonus.



For 'morning tea' we ate 4 of the 8 muffins I had made last night for travel. This meant that at 'lunch time' we weren't exactly hungry so the bolognaise sauce made after we moved, sat waiting for the next appropriate meal.



We eventually had our lunch at around 1400. I had hoped to go for a walk today but after lunch I was not in the mood; and we would have had to drop the tinny in the swell and that wasn't ideal. I spent the afternoon jotting down my diary notes; although as usual they turned from dot points to toward dissertation.

Birds. Egret (sp?), terns, silver gull, whistling kite (heard), white-faced heron, beach curlew, swallow. Bush stone curlews had been heard overnight.

Dolphins were spotted frolicking in the channel between K'gari and the mainland.



There had been only two other boats in this area when we put the anchor down; by sundown there were 11!

K'Gari to Peel Island, Morton Bay

24th - 25th October 2023

A walk before the sail

24th October 2023. It was just getting light around 0430. At least two boats had left by 0500. I heard one and saw one pass. By this time I hadn't gone outside. Conditions were calm.

I got up, put some dishes away, and generally potted around. It was Andrew who opened the back door this morning, at around 0600 when he got up. 'They are all gone,' he said! There was only us and the cat left. No wind. Scattered cumulous.

We were on shore and walking at 0726. We had seen the dingo on patrol this morning, before we headed to shore. It was taking an easterly stroll along the beach. Therefore, when we started our walk, we headed west. When we got to the campground, it was empty, which added conviction to our supposition that yesterday's hoard of young, thin, 'pretty' people were day trippers only.

The campground consists of several picnic tables and one slightly dilapidated boat ramp. Which seems to be a replacement of one disintegrated boat ramp. Which in turn may have been the access replacement of the old jetty, the posts' of which are still visible, but given the age of the timber industry on this island, the jetty may have been a ruin many years ago. There is also a big cage - we didn't inspect this too closely but it's probably a food locker. At the campground we took the inland road and followed it back to the beach east of where we had left the tinnie, indeed just east of where the vehicle ferry lands.

There were quite a few birds about this morning, and a lot were seen flirting in the trees. My binoculars were in my pack and the light not good, and the subjects too far away, for the camera. Andrew spotted a wattlebird, pied currawong, and a whimbrel (on the beach, clearly not in the bush).





A dead cane toad was passed and I commented to Andrew that I hoped the dingos had learnt not to eat them. Just at this point Andrew mentioned there was a dingo coming our way.



What! Where? Along the track. The signs say visitors shouldn't approach dingoes. They say nothing about dingoes approaching visitors. The bush was thick and there was nowhere really to step off here anyway and we wondered what to do. If we stopped and 'stepped off the track,' it would only be a foot or so. So we kept on our track. He kept on his. We (Andrew and I vs the dingo) migrated to opposite sides of the road (for a starboard to starboard pass) and in the end it was the dingo that stepped off the scarred sand onto the litter covered edge. By all of about 30cm. He watched us. We watched him. It was a respectful passing even if it wasn't a great distance. And we slowly backed off. He watched us. We watched him. He took a couple of tentative steps our way. Maybe he wanted to be companionable? Not a great idea with a wild animal! We barked at him. This didn't seem to do much and he took another couple of tentative steps. Andrew threw a rock towards him. He sniffed it but it didn't seem to have much of an effect. A couple of further small steps toward us and another couple of rocks landing near him finally convinced the animal that perhaps we weren't all that interesting after all. He turned back to his original course and went on his way. We spent the next twenty or so minutes checking behind us regularly but there was eventually no sign of him. If he was doing the rounds then perhaps we would see him on his next circuit along the beach.



Well we did. But not from the direction we expected! We had made our way back on to the beach and had passed a 4WD waiting for the Mantaray Barge. We



were almost at our tinnie when Andrew gave a start. Around, in Andrews estimation, 10 feet away (I don't know why he was using feet not meters), the dingo raced past us! From behind!

He didn't stop. Perhaps he recognised that we were the two humans who threw rocks at him. He did stop at our tinnie however, sniffing first the boat, and then where the anchor was part buried. I half expected him to leave his mark at one of those locations.

We were back at the tinnie at around 0900. There was a slight north-west wind and we got a bit wet getting back on board Sengo. A monohull, which had followed us out of the Burnett River, anchored to our west and given that we had 75 meters of chain out I was a bit worried they were hanging over our anchor. I needn't have been concerned.

The anchor was up at 1415. The plan was to raise the main sail prior to exit but put a reef in it. But we changed our minds. In the end we didn't raise any sail at all until we were out of the Wide Bay Bar, and then only the genoa was used. Generally, we don't log on with VMR in QLD. I think every time I make this statement I give an explanation. The one exception is that we do log on with Tin Can Bay when crossing the Wide Bay Bar. Today however, it took us a while to get through. The radio was not getting answered, (Channel 16 or Channel 80), the mobile wasn't getting answered, and the land line went on to their weekend/emergency answering machine message. Of all the VMR's to not be answering! Eventually we did get through and got ourselves put on the log. The mad mile wasn't all that mad, although it did have a couple of jiggly moments (tomorrow morning's forecast was for slightly smoother waters but given we wanted to get to Peel Island before a horrible southerly change was coming through, we couldn't wait). When we got to the final waypoint. I asked Andrew whether he wanted to log off. In a minute, he said. We will pull the genoa out first. Well, from being uncontactable to being overly officious. Just as we passed the waypoint Andrew's phone went. I didn't get to it in time. Then the radio called. Good grief. VMR could see we were past Way Point One. Talk about lack of patience!

We were across the bar at 1545.

At 1800 we were circled by a Brown Booby. At 1805 he landed. At 1900 I couldn't make him out on the spreaders but then again I could hardly make out the spreaders. At 1930 a



strange cluck alerted me to a change of position. The Booby had gone for a steadier roost. Unfortunately it was a solar one!

We had meatloaf and salad for dinner around 1700. The sea state had settled. Andrew went for snooze at 1900

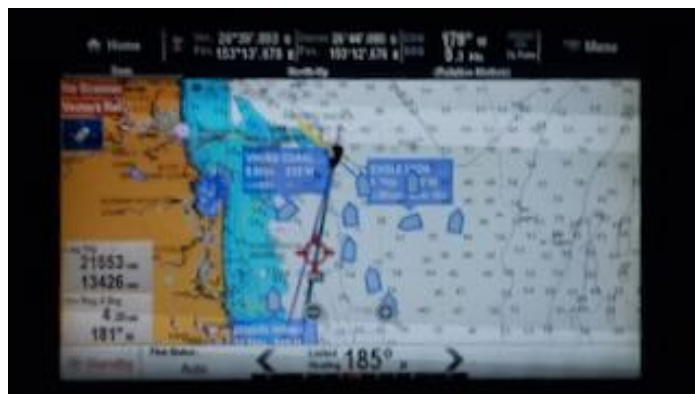
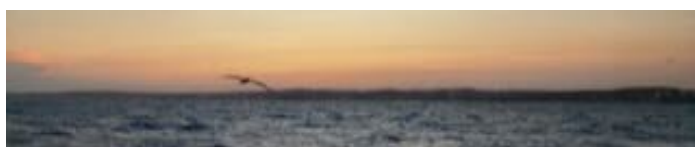
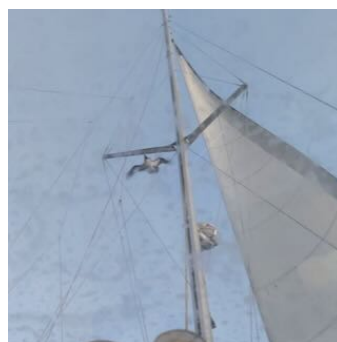
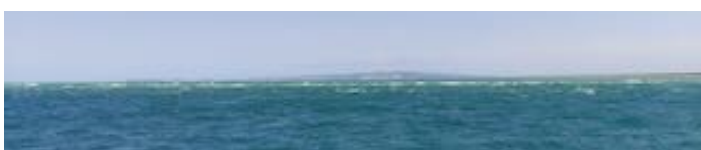
At midnight when I got back on shift after a 3-hour snooze, I found we were just about to head into the ship anchoring area at Point Cartwright. Terrific! There was one obviously moving ship on our rum line but the greatest item of concern was a ship coming in from the east.

Our hitchhiker was still with us. Andrew said he'd been asleep. The bird obviously woke a little as we swapped control of the helm, whinging for the light to be turned off that had been on to help Andrew get safely down the stairs. Yes. Alright. Was he insinuating that the light was disturbing his sleep? Fussy bird! He tucked his head back under his wing to sleep again after that (now that the light pollution had been turned off!)

Andrew's next shift was from 0300 to 0600. By the time I got up at 0600 the Booby had been gone an hour. Andrew anthropomorphised that he looked a bit shocked when he left.. he had been travelling with us for 11 hours! He did leave a horrible reminder...but fortunately the mess was on the deck and canvas below...not on the solar panels!

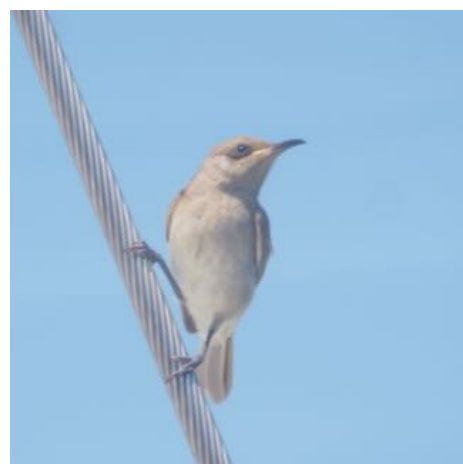
Andrew and I shared our usual Brexit YouTube over a cuppa and he went to bed at 0700, getting up at 0930 whilst I was wiping the salt off the clears.

At around 0940 we got another avian visitor, also initially photographed through the dirty roof window of the helm. The little honeyeater flitted its way up the port



jackstays and rigging, before trying an attempt towards Morton Island, doubling-back and landing again, disappearing from view, only to startle me when I took a step forward and spied it on the starboard stays adjacent the helm. The photo on this page is through rough plastic, but clearer than the photos through the helm roof.

The genoa was furled at 1215. The anchor was down in Horseshoe Bay, Peel Island, at the back line of a loose pack of 17 boats (including us and the interesting looking pv Polyma) at 1222. I wiped down the front covers so I could roll up the middle and know I wasn't going to catch too much salt, and settled down with a cuppa, (a crappy coffee-yes, I know) and a trashy, easy reading, novel at 1242.



Hiding from excessive wind!: Peel Island to Macleay Island

26th October 2023. We were up around 0600. The sun was already hot. The occupancy of Horseshoe Bay, Peel Island had reduced by one third. The wind was blowing north-west and the boat was just starting to get a bit jiggly again due to the rising tide. The rock had calmed down overnight, as the wind direction had eased to the west..as we had expected it to. Banana Bank just south of us had gusted to 29 knots overnight.

The wind was still north-west and we hoped that we might be able to coast to our next anchorage with the genoa. However when the anchor was lifted the wind was only blowing 7 knots True, and shortly after wind dropped down to 4 knots True. We can't sail in that!

I had to increase the engine speed at one point to avoid a collision with a 'sailing?' yacht (he had his sails up but we suspect he had the motor on) but there were no other potential issues on this journey, except of course the usual crab pots out between Macleay and Garden Islands.

We had a visitor on this trip as well. Have we suddenly become an avian magnet? The silver gull lasted half the distance. Like the booby he travelled on the solar panels. Like the booby he left a mess. Unlike the booby he didn't miss!

The anchor was down at our usual spot between the islands at 0830. Whilst I sent Andrew up to clean the silver gull poop off the panels I started to clean the starboard gunwale.

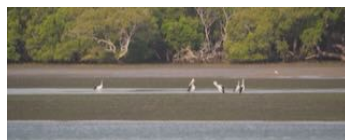
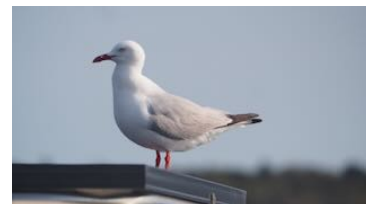
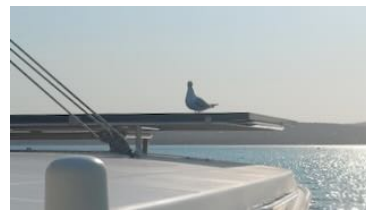
The sky had been mostly blue when we got up. By 1000 it was almost entirely grey and prosaic. And at 1000 the wind was gusting to 16 knots. Looking outside at 1120 there were shore birds on the sandbank at dropping tide, and the goats were by their shed at Garden Island.

I washed the top of the helm station, in the hope that the predicted rain would get rid of any muck I missed. I had hoped to continue cleaning the rest of the boat but the wiping towel didn't get dry in time.

At 1600 Banana Bank - now to the north of us, gusted SSE 27 knots. It rained a bit during the afternoon - but not excessively. I changed the bedsheets and put the mattress topper in the front cockpit to air.

Breakfast was yoghurt, lunch was pancakes, and dinner was bean and kale soup. We spent the evening watching SBS On Demand. I then finished a trashy novel and went to bed at 2345

Birds: Apart from our silver gull guest - egrets, whimbrels, and a soaring white bellied sea eagle.



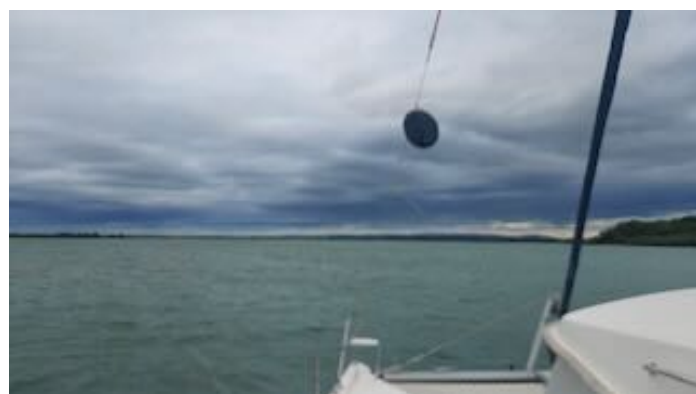
Macleay Island

27 October 2023. The swallows are back, chortling around the boat at around 0600. Parrots (lorikeets?) heard from shore. An oyster catcher had called going east earlier, and white-bellied sea-eagles clucked in the distance. A sulphur crested cockatoo also squawked as it went past.

By 0830 it was blowing 20 knots and increasing. A fisherman was out checking his crab pots and a flotilla of avian attendants were attentive. Skies were grey and according to the rain radar, rain was heading up the coast.

There was a gale warning today for the Gold Coast. I think technically we are in Morton Bay but we are close to the top of the Gold Coast area. We had seen 27knots on our gauges yesterday. Banana Bank, just to the north of us registered 29'! Today we saw 39.9!

The afternoon was spent reading and watching television. We weren't inspired to do much more as it rained on and off and was cold; we both put our tracksuit pants on - this is Queensland - isn't the general pertinacious opinion that it is not supposed to be cold!



28th October 2023. Breakfast was at 0900. I had been up from before 0600. Andrew got up an hour or so later. The wind speeds seemed lower than yesterday, thankfully, but the side-on swell, and the fact we were to the east of our anchor, made for a slightly uncomfortable morning. There was still a strong wind warning today in this area.

We undertook our usual stay on boat, bad weather activities: reading, uk politics, etc.

Birds: Whimbrels, eastern curlews, pelicans, white ibis, ducks, egrets, silver gulls, oyster catcher, white-faced heron.

Macleay Island to Paradise Point

29th October 2023. I had forgotten there were roosters on Garden Island until around 0500 when a brief morning greeting was advertised. This was followed by a mournful cry, the owner of which I should know, but couldn't remember. After that it was quiet. There was a line of grey clouds to the east out to sea, and scattered patches of grey clouds to the west.

We attempted to lift the anchor at 0600. But it stuck fast. Really fast. Wow - I didn't think we would be needing 4WD tactics on a boat but with a bit of persistence, and 'rocking' to and fro, we were finally free at 0615. We were under the powerlines at Rocky Point at 0805...last time we passed under here we were travelling in the opposite direction - *and* had no mast to worry about. We were over the shallow bit at Jacob's Well at 0920.

As usual we had a meticulous Plan A; we had been expecting to anchor at Crab Island this morning, and then tomorrow do a quick early morning shop at Runaway Bay Centre, before filling up with fuel before anchoring in our end-of-Coomera River gutter anchorage in the middle of the day, before Andrew's dentist appointment at 1400.

But between crab pots and day pontoon boats there was no where suitable to put the anchor down at Crab Island, so we changed our plan. The wind was calm enough so we filled up with fuel and then settled in to our gutter anchorage. The anchor was down at 1155. After



pancakes for lunch we settled down to a relaxing afternoon, the mood of which was only temporarily broken by a large mono which looked like it was going to anchor way too close! Fortunately prudence on behalf of the crew had them moving further south before the anchor was dropped. They were gone by dark. We spent the afternoon reading and watching a lot of tv.



Birds seemed to be in pairs today. A pair of sea eagles raided a crab pot at low tide, as did a pair of cravens. A pair of eastern curlews frolicked on the mudflat and a pair of pied oyster catchers flew past. A pair of silver gulls also flew past us. The only obvious exception was a lone Brahminy kite who had welcomed us into our anchorage.



30th October 2023. Clearly a jet skier decided it was time for us to wake up at 0715, as he shot past far too close, and far too quickly. I had been up for around an hour but either the noise or the resulting boat movement was what got Andrew out of bed.

There was no wind. As expected. To the point I think I felt a couple of little midge bites as I cleared the washing from the back so we could go to shore. The only bird noted at this time was a mournful flying craven.



I had suggested an 0800 start for the walk to Runaway Bay. But we weren't in the tinnie until 0810 and I suspected it was going to be an 0830 start. In the end due to engine issues it was 0900 before we started heading south.



The first birds noted on our walk were corellas and feral pigeons on the bridge to Ephraim Island. This morning's walk wasn't long but at least it was a walk; the approximately three and a half kilometre stroll taking approximately forty five minutes - as it usually does. Our time at Runaway Bay Centre wasn't glamorous, mainly occupied with food shopping. We got the bus back to Paradise Point, had lunch at one of the eateries across from the shoreline park and then whilst I headed into the butcher, Andrew headed off to the dentist. His appointment was delayed and we didn't get our preferred dentist but when you are changing appointments with short notice you take what you can get. The upshot of that appointment is two more, slightly more serious, appointments next year.

It was a lowish tide when we got in the tinnie to get back to boat, and several birds were enjoying what was left of the sandbank in the middle of the Paradise Point anchorage - including eight black swans! It was also windy - which we expected it to be. Ironically, having briefly considered coming in to the Paradise Point anchorage if there had been room, we found our current anchorage much more comfortable from a wind perspective.



Paradise Point to Tiger Mullet Channel

31st October 2023. The morning started calm but the wind had picked up by 0730, which made for a jiggly ride with wind from the north and an incoming tide from the south.

Calculating, we worked out leaving at 0845 with an estimated 1.5hr trip would work for a 1.6m tide at 1108 up Whalleys Gutter. In practice we took a little longer than we expected. It took 25 minutes to get the anchor up, but it wasn't a case of too much mud this time. Somehow the chain had hooked itself onto the chain clip so there was a loop of chain that needed to be cleared. The grotesque looking hook up wasn't tight however and every time I got close to getting the bridle hook back on board it slipped down a meter or so of chain. In the end I did get it above the deck but the loop had now tightened up. There was no way we were going to be able to release it without taking the pressure off the chain. Clearly we couldn't do this with the end leading to the anchor as it was. So using the spinnaker line we grabbed the chain, and Andrew jiggled it so we could retrieve the bridle clip. It was bit fiddly. And somewhat annoying in grumpy winds. Never-the-less the rest of the trip went without an issue. The anchor was down at our usual Tiger Mullet spot at 1035.

Daily winds didn't seem as bad as predicted, and whilst at one stage we were facing north (it was lovely to sit in the front cockpit with the covers off admiring a different coastline in front of me) most of the day the tide determined the direction the boat faced. A short period of running the water-maker had us discovering a concerning issue that may delay our departure from the Gold Coast.

Few birds called today. We weren't greeted into this anchorage by sea eagles as we had been last time, but whistling kites called later in the day. An egret wandered the southern shoreline on the dropping tide, and a white-faced heron, and oyster catchers flew by. Bush birds were heard before dusk. After spending some time chatting to a friend I entered the living area to find Andrew looking at the rain radar. There is some rain coming he said, maybe. Whether it was going to affect us, veer off, or dissipate was yet to be seen.

