

# Aboard Sengo



**Some Good Weather!**

*And...*

**Some Bad Weather!**

*And...*

**Some Exploring!**

## WESTERN PORT

Final days at Victoria's second-biggest 'bay.'

## DEAL ISLAND

An absolutely delightful stop.

## GIPPSLAND LAKES

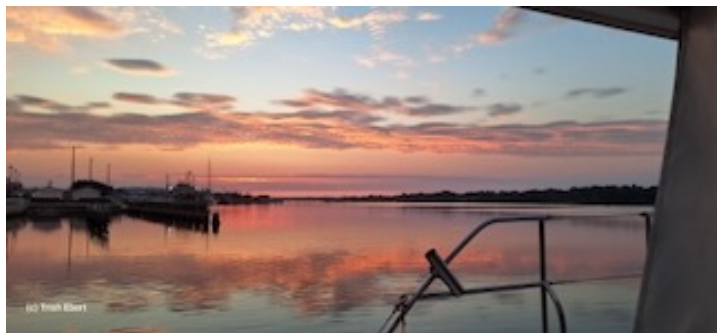
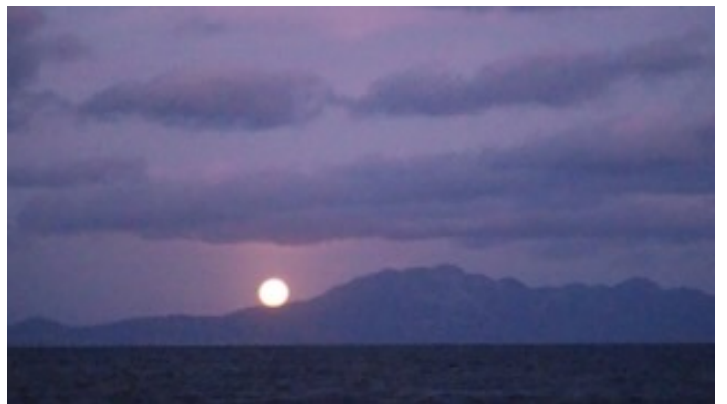
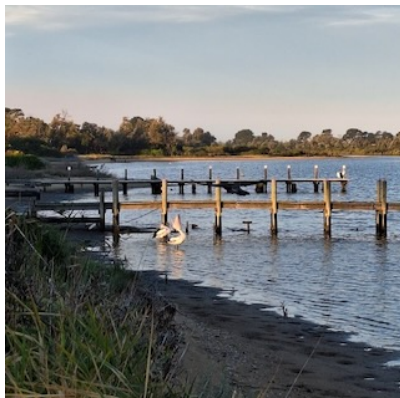
A reluctant, but acceptable, Plan B!

Cruising again! Finally! It has been such a long time where we could say we were actually cruising without a timeline hanging over our heads. Well, there was one timeline pending - but as that wasn't until June we knew we could relax and explore during April.

We had already started exploring new places in March, finding ourselves in Westernport Bay; a new location for us. Unfortunately we didn't get a second opportunity to land on French Island before leaving mid April and heading into the infamous Bass Strait.

A lot of people are scared of Bass Strait; for good reason. But we manage our timing and hide appropriately where and when needed. Our visit to Deal Island was the highlight of April, although we only got to shore twice. We also tried to visit the Furneaux Group to Tasmania's north-east - but that didn't quite go to plan.

We started the month at the top of French Island, Westernport Bay, Victoria. We finished the month in Lakes Entrance, Gippsland Lakes, Victoria.



## Western Port

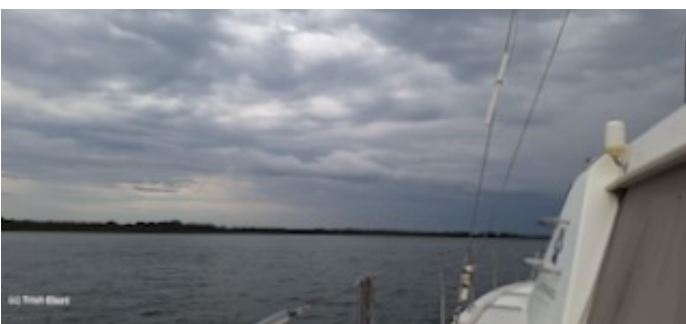
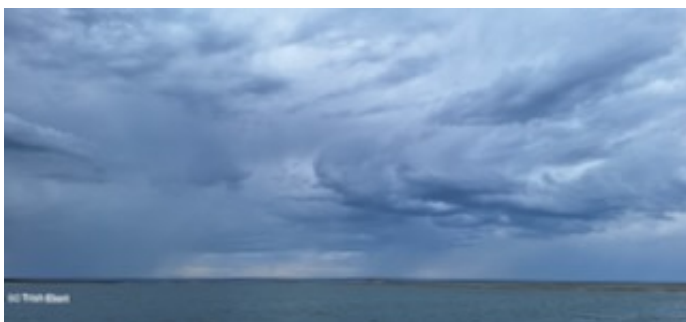
### Chicory Lane - north of French Island

1st April 2024. The first two species I noticed this morning as I rolled up the back covers just after getting out of bed (at around 0920), were swans (six) to the south, and a mosquito (buzzing around under our back overhang). Then I turned around and noticed the sand bank was starting to expose on the dropping tide. On it were several birds. Around it were dozens more. I counted three pelicans, and one hundred and twenty seven swans! Two oystercatchers also flew past.

There were several fishing tinnies on the northern side of the sand bank, and although the predominant sound was the water running past our hulls, there was the muffled murmur of what sounded like traffic? Perhaps it was just engine noise from excessive boat movement?

It was windy all day. Rain started falling at 1350 - and continued all afternoon. Some fisherman came in and were anchored to our East - through the 30-plus knots of wind - during rain and several gusty fronts! I managed some boat jobs: including using the water collected off the boat to rinse the ropes - I just couldn't dry them. Other jobs included admin for an upcoming international trip.

The evening was spent watching television (Outback Opal Hunters and Salvage Aus - not



exactly intellectual programs but entertaining enough to keep us amused).





## Chicory Lane

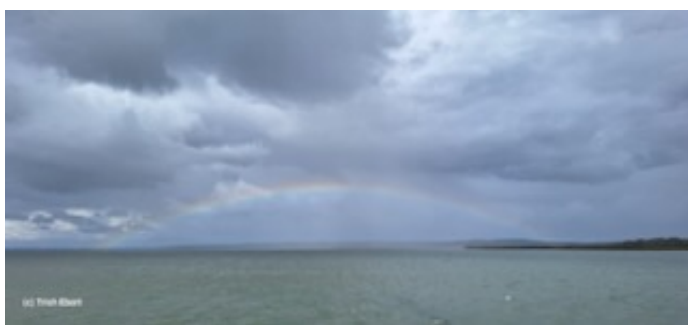
2nd April 2024. I was up at 0330 with a bad stomach - and regularly after that for an hour. I managed a 1.5 hour break but then I was up again. There was another 45 min break and snooze and then I was up again. I got a final snooze in before finally getting up for the day around 1000.

Breakfast was yoghurt, apple and pecans -Andrew had waited for me, which was sweet. There was less rain today than yesterday; with the water collected, I finished off rinsing the ropes and put some out to dry.

Officially, yesterday was going to be the wet day, and indeed was excessively so (Rhyll recorded 57.8mm to 0900 this morning) - today however was going to be (predicted) the 'grumpy day!' When I got up I found we were side-on to the waves - not pleasant but the rock did settle down around 1100.

I rang our bank re some cancelled credit cards - hopefully some missing refund money should come back into our account.

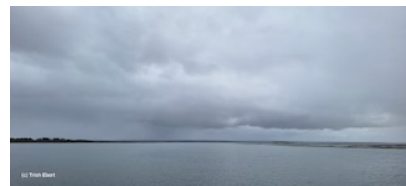
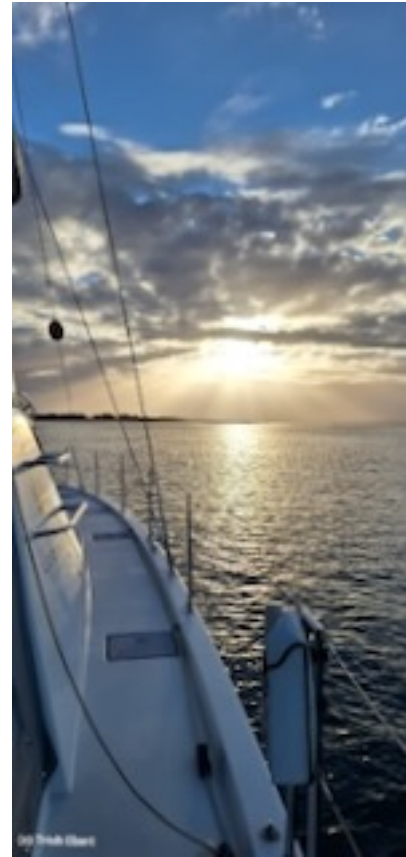
There were a few showers during the day but a solid amount of rain hit us at 1610. The wind was strong, and the direction was now a solid south-west - so the ride was comfortable - this wind direction was, after all, the reason we came into this anchorage



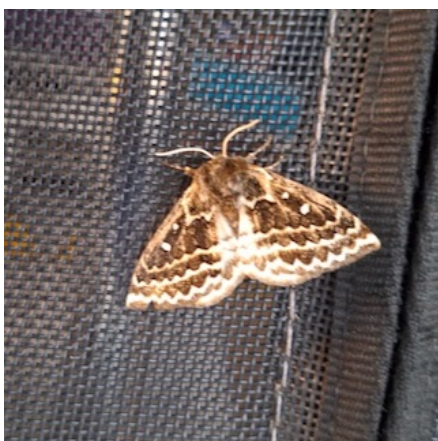
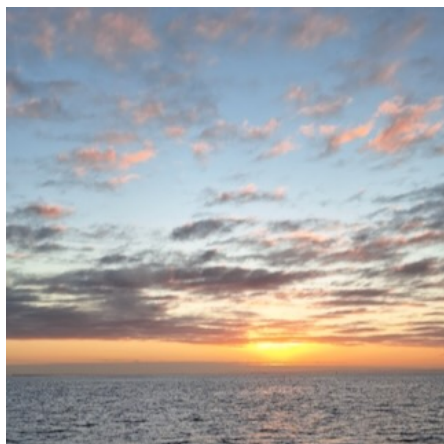
## Chicory Lane

3rd April 2024. What a slightly cold and grey, nondescript, day. The wind predictions were good to go exploring, but the top temperature left a lot to be desired, and the 80 pc chance of 1 to 3 mm wasn't conducive to planning anything (originally, I had been thinking of getting the kayak out).

It wasn't raining when I got up around 0730 but it did start not long after - there were breaks where the sun was trying to get through the thinner sections of cloud, and if out of the wind the temperature felt a very light 'warm.' Sometimes the wind was non-existent as to render the water surface glass. But then the wind would pick up a bit to hail the coming of yet another shower. Swans were on the sandbanks, lapwings flying through, and just before 1200 a pair of Cape Barren Geese flew past.



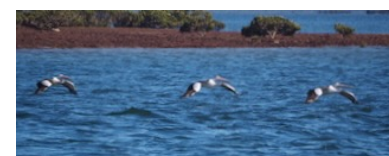




## Chicory Lane to Cowes

4th April 2024. We motored south today. The forecast 'grumpy weather' had passed and we headed south to restock the larder. We anchored at the last spot we had anchored at off Phillip Island, and headed off to shore. On a whim I thought I might see if we could get a flu jab. The chemist we walked into did take walk-ins - but only between 1000 and 1200. It was around 1400 by the time we got to shore so that wasn't going to work. After a grocery shop we tried the second chemist in town - they did flu jabs as well - but you had to book online. We didn't have time to worry about that so moved on.

Thankfully, it was a relatively comfortable tinnie ride to and from shore.



## Cowes to Coronet Bay

5th April 2024. The idea was take the morning tide to Corinella, negotiate the jetty, go for a walk, and then retreat to our planned anchoring spot for the next couple of nights, to the south of the hamlet of Coronet Bay.

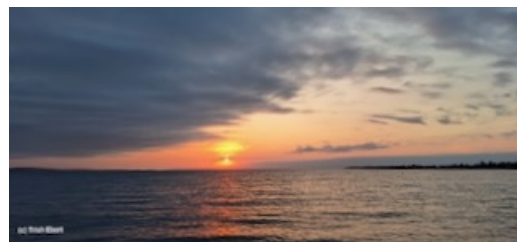
But we got up later than hoped, anchored south of Settlement Point, rather than north-east of Corinella, and found ourselves with a side-on-swell greater than preferred. Given that the wind was colder than preferred, and the likelihood of dropping the tinnie was going to be stressful and wet, I decided that perhaps we would skip the exploration of the Corinella hamlet, and just move down the coast a bit to our overnight anchorage.

When we did finally put the anchor down for our overnight stop we found the chop was less in the slightly more protected Coronet Bay, and the wind did drop down in the afternoon - but we stayed on board.

Given the afternoon sun we finally got the dock-lines dry and put away - these were the lines that had secured us at Wyndham Harbour, and I had waited to wash them in the rainfall that we've had since leaving dock.

While half-watching the AFL on television, I cut out and edged material for three small bags for the next os trip. The other job was a bit of diary-note editing.

Minimal bird life was spotted today. I saw three less birds than Andrew. Birds on the way to our final anchorage:- Cape Barren Geese, pied cormorants, and a silver gull.



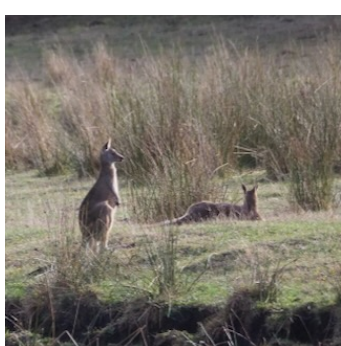
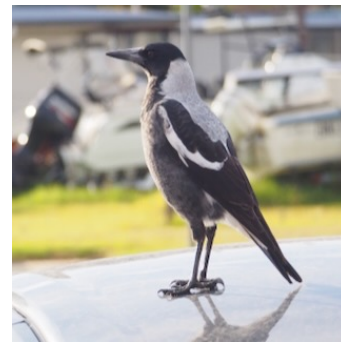
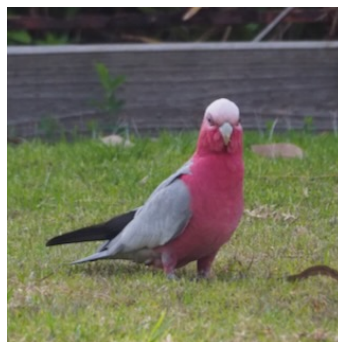
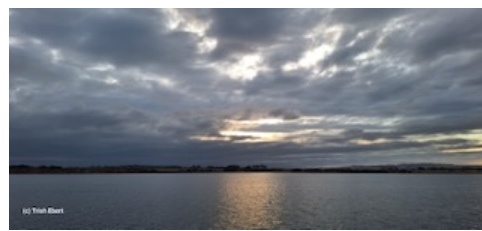


## Coronet Bay - and Corinella!

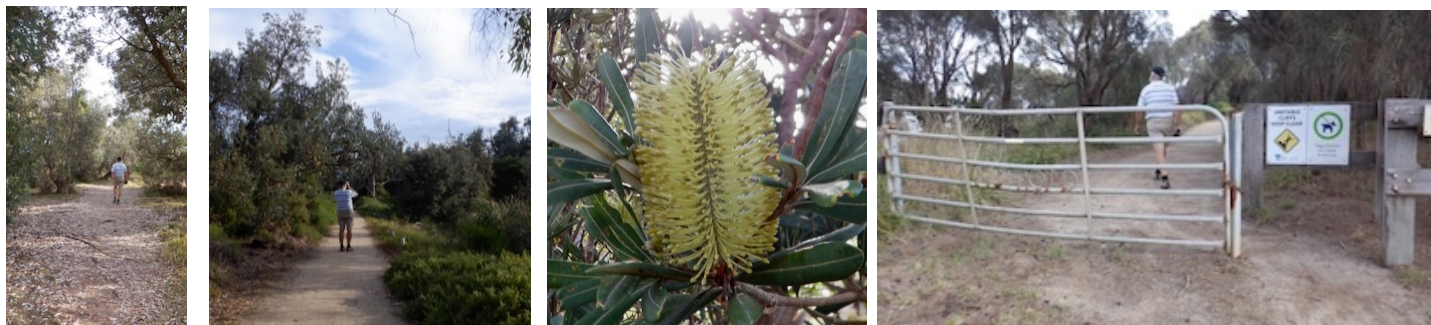
### Two birds....or more!

6th April 2024. The forecast was for 10 to 15 knot easterlies, but when I got up it was blowing much less. In fact the water was almost glass. I had warned Andrew of an early start - well early for him - and proposed to head across to Coronet Bay around 0900. On a rising tide this would mean we had about two hours to wander around before the tide was back to the level we left it, which would facilitate an easy return to boat. The charts suggest the substrate off shore at Coronet Bay is mud, but a fishing kayaker, who came in as we were arriving, said that the beach is sand all the way down to low tide. That was good. That meant if we did get back to the tinnie after 1100 we would be dragging it (we had left the wheels aboard Sengo) over sand and not mud; a much easier prospect.

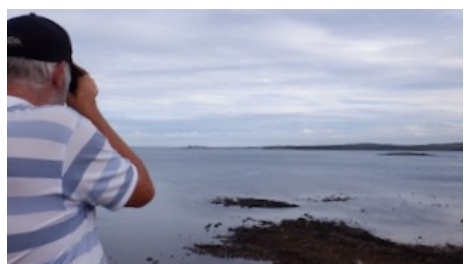
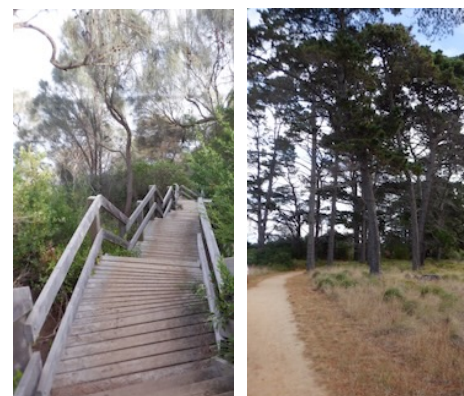
So we headed in to 'town' at Coronet Bay... which seems to consist only of a General Store. It is located a block from the shore and had enough stocks if you were desperate for food - just very limited stocks not to give me allergic reactions. We briefly chatted to a bunch of rednecked blokes (duck hunters) having a cuppa under the General Store verandah, patted the chocolate lab, admired 'Daicos' and 'De Goey' the two local magpies, and headed north. I had discovered this morning that there might be a walking track between Coronet Bay and Corinella. I asked the kayaker how long he thought it would take to walk. His estimation was around 30 to 45 minutes.







In the end it took longer than that. Be we were stopping to look at birds. The route encompasses the 'Coast Banksia and Wetland Walk' and the track that along the Corinella Foreshore Reserve. Vegetation to the southern end had a lot more banksias, and noticeably, a lot more birds. We walked all the way to Settlement Point, admiring the view, and the birds on the rock platform, before checking out the Corinella Jetty, boat ramps, and general store, and finishing with a cuppa at the 'Fig and The Bay'. This popular eatery (possibly the only one in town) was almost fully booked. It is also conveniently on the track we had walked here on, so heading back toward our start point was easy.



We had left boat around 0830 and we were walking by 0850. We got back to the tinnie just after 1200. The wind had clearly picked up, and whilst there were no obvious whitecaps, the side-on waves were enough to splash us wet on the way back to boat. The dark grey clouds I had spotted early this morning had lightened off considerably when we went to shore. However the sky was now getting darker again. A check of the rain radar suggested rain heading our way. We were back aboard Sengo at 1235. The first raindrops fell at 1250.

Bird list: magpie, galah, eastern rosella, crimson rosella, little wattlebird, red wattlebird, pied cormorant, mudlark, willy wagtail, grey fantail, blue wren, ???, noisy miner, common mynah, blackbird, silver gull, black swan, pied corm?, pied oystercatchers, terns.???, white ibis, great egret, small bird (check photo), welcome swallow, starling, three types of duck, mallard, Cape Barren geese.



## Coronet Bay to south-west of Freeman Point, French Island

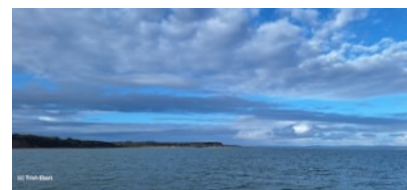
7th April 2024. The anchor was down at around 0813 north-east of Corinella. I was wet. The tramp was covered in thick dollops of mud (that thick that I wouldn't be surprised if you could have made ceramics out of them), and weed. And until it stopped raining I didn't care. The wind had changed overnight - as expected, and Rhyll was recording SSW winds when I got up. This for us, although they were light, resulted in a slightly uncomfortable fetch, and it was only going to get worse; the coastline becoming more of a lee shore predicted as the day went on. So, for a few hours, we moved to north-east of Corinella; avoiding the small fishing boats that were out in the grey nothingness of the drizzly morning.

The first bird I heard this morning was a lapwing. We saw a small flock of pied cormorants heading north, but apparently Andrew saw a brace of Cape Barren Geese as I was fighting to try to get some of the mud off the anchor.. my head was down - it was a frustrating job.

We were always going to have a fetch this afternoon - it was just how long we wanted to have it. At 1530 we picked the anchor up again - after being sheltered from the south east winds for several hours - and travelled - by motor - west to round Snapper Rock before taking the channel adjacent to French Island. We were heading for the shallower bit of the this channel - which we ended up at, but we did note a couple of other spots on the way that may have had less afternoon fetch. The anchor was down again at 1620. The wind was relatively light - and as a result - the sun felt warm. Low tide was 1626.

The mud on the anchor when I picked it up seemed even clingier than that of this morning - at that point I still hadn't cleaned the front. I had however dusted C1 and paired some odd socks!

My afternoon activity was reading: James A Michener's, *Alaska*.



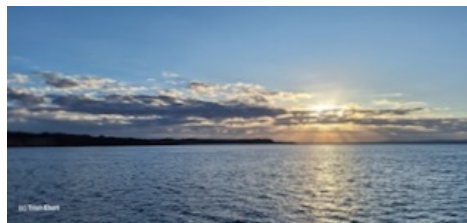


## South-west of Freeman Point, French Island, to north-east of Spit Point, French Island

8th April 2024. Like yesterday the first bird I heard this morning was a lapwing. The sandbanks were too far away to positively identify anything on them with the naked eye, but at least it was sunny! Albeit with a slightly chilly wind. Cows mooed in the background - from French Island - not all of the island is National Park.

We were moving again today. Given the coming forecast 'grumpy wind' the most practical spot (short of going back to anchor off Silverleaf near Cowes again) was to head north of The Spit at the eastern end of French Island. The original idea had been to move around 1100. But as we were getting close to that time, the north-west wind was still prevalent - and we would not be protected from it around the corner. Maybe we would wait an hour. As soon as we noticed the wind change we did move - and this ended up being closer to our original plan of 1100. We were taking the shallow end of the channel we were in - the least depth noted on the gauges was 0.6m.

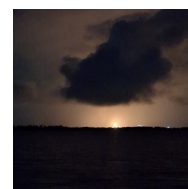
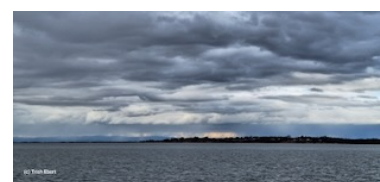
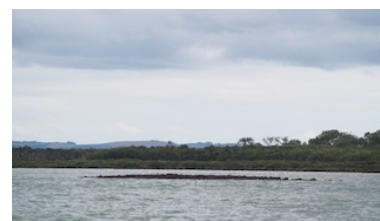
Anchor Plan A - was too close to a sandbank! As we had seen a rock just showing out of the top of the surf to the land side of the channel we were going to anchor in (the rock is not on the chart we have), Andrew had placed the boat further to the east than the middle of the planned anchoring area when we dropped the anchor - unfortunately this meant that at stretch on that side we had only 2m under our keels. That's ok, Andrew said, the boat has settled now - we are back to 5 meters. That would be fine if there was no wind expected from the south-west which was going to put us right over the shallow bit. We moved to the other option - Anchor Plan B - shallower water but still with enough for the dropping tide over the next couple of



days. To get there we had to sidle around the exposed rock - which was clearly just to the west side of the charted deeper water in the narrow bit of the channel - and we didn't know how far out it extended.

Anchor Plan B seemed good - and the anchor was down at 1330. The ride was a bit bumpy as the north-west wind was back - and we had no protection. But the wind was due to turn westerly, then south-westerly overnight. A tern welcomed us in. Ibis, swans, terns and others had been seen on The Spit

The rain started at 1500. I saw 23.5 knots on the gauges as I moved the drying clothes from the back clothes-line to the warmer and dryer helm station



## North of the French Island sand spit

9th April 2024. All was still when I woke up this morning. And then it wasn't - the wind picked up, and the rain came down. And then thirty minutes later, when I got out of bed, it was still again. The sky was grey



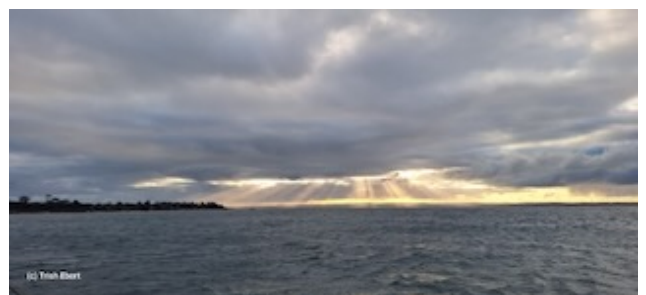
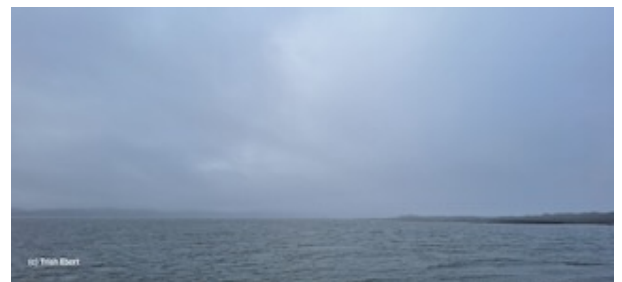
## North west of French Island Sand Spit to Cowes (Silverleaf)

10th April 2024. It rained on and off this morning, but it was light. The wind was freezing! Andrew tried draining the engine oil with not much success. He was hoping a change of oil would help with the slight issues we have with the port engine. I watched terns hunting in the waters around Sengo.

The anchor was up at 1420 - and down again at 1635 at the last anchorage we'd had on Phillip Island - adjacent Silverleaf. We motored all the way - we had to - the wind was on our nose - and apparent winds reached 30 knots! 'Are you sure this is the best time to move?' Andrew asked me as we bumped into slightly uncomfortable seas.

Although we had aimed for our old spot off Silverleaf, we were prepared to change if it didn't seem tenable. Andrew made the call. The evening wasn't the smoothest ride- the wind was still more west than south-west - and the boat went around in circles (you would think we were in the Burnett River)!

Crepuscular rays from the setting sun looked lovely.





## Cowes (Silverleaf)

11th April 2024. We woke up to smooth seas. The change had come. Skies were grey, and looking at the rain radar it seemed that rain was falling where we had been yesterday, as well as to the west, although a light smattering was only showing on the rain radar. Low tide was at 0807. High tide was after 1400 - that's when we would go to shore - to work with the high tide. I had thought again about getting flu shots but dismissed this idea on two fronts - the only option would be the 10-12 session at one chemist which we discovered last time (and we were not going to make the time), and even if we had made the time, if we had had reactions to them that might put a dampener on the next few days - I was looking forward to sailing. And hopefully exploring!

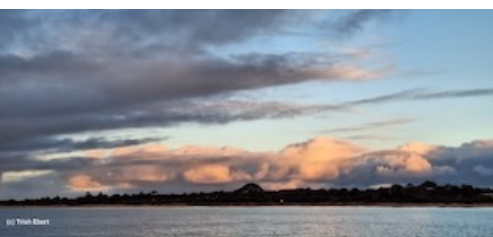
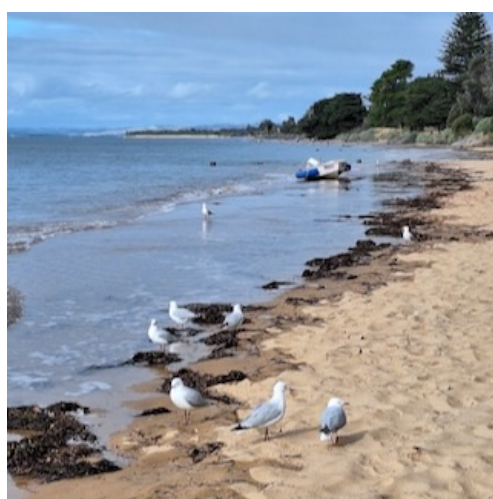
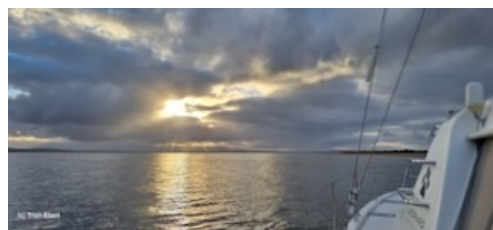
High tide was due at Cowes Jetty at 1449. We needed a walk but we also needed shopping; the last lot of food supplies was now depleted. Subsequently, I wanted to leave boat at 1330 to give us time for some exercise as well as the shop. We managed to leave at 1335. But we didn't go for a walk. Andrew had spent the late morning fighting with oil in the port engine. The job wasn't finished and therefore we didn't have time for recreation.

We chose a different spot to land the tinnie than previously. There is a channel that runs along the beach where we have landed before, and with an incoming tide the chance of our tinnie being pushed over the hump and into the channel was high. I didn't savour the prospect of dragging the tinnie uphill and out again.

So we chose a flatter bit of beach... which turned out to be perfect. We got back to the tinnie ten minutes after high tide around 1505. And despite the surf-like waves that we had left when we landed, launching was a breeze. We were back on Sengo at 1510.

Andrew went back to fighting with the engine oil. I put the food away, sorted some property admin, had a break, made muffins for tomorrow's lunch and did the dishes.

We spent the evening on separate activities. I watched an Italian drama, Andrew read.



Bird list was minimal; on shore - grey fantail, rainbow lorikeets, silver gulls.

Wildlife: A rabbit.

A kookaburra was heard in evening.

## Into Bass Strait

Off Silverleaf, Phillip Island, Western Port Bay to Winter Cove, Deal Island, The Kent Group

12th April 2024 - 13th April 2024

12th April 2024. The alarm was on for 0630. It was light...just. The sky (and surrounds) was actually a mid-grey, the colour produced by rain showers. By the time I went to empty the rain collecting bucket it was not raining above us, but it was still raining on French Island.

We started lifting the anchor at 0710...but it wasn't finally up until 0725...due to the amount of weed wrapped around the chain. There was, however, no residual substrate on the anchor.

The main sail was lifted in 8 knots breeze facing NW at 0745. We motored towards the western entrance to the 'Bay', heading into the rain, and a 'very bumpy' departure. At one stage I asked Andrew what he wanted to do, as this wasn't comfortable. He did comment this 'wasn't the normal swell', and indeed just after we had left the start of the shipping channel the seas evened out... to an extent.

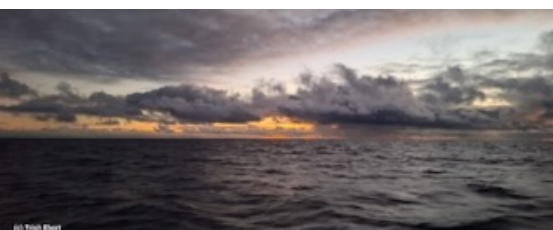
Both engines went off at 0910 and we were sailing... in the wrong direction! A few tacks later and we were going in the right direction, sort of.

There were showers all around us, and they did not help the consistency of the wind, but eventually the wind was strong enough to give us good speed. And then it wasn't. And then the wind changed, and we were back to good boat speed.

However that didn't last and whilst I was having a nice snooze, Andrew put one engine on at 1410... It was fair enough..he wasn't happy wallowing at 1.9 knots!

During my snooze an albatross had given the boat a fly-by, and another was seen as I emerged into the cockpit. Spotted also: an Australasian gannet, terns (sp?), and shearwaters (species ?).

Vistas around the boat were of rain patches, clouds and rainbows!

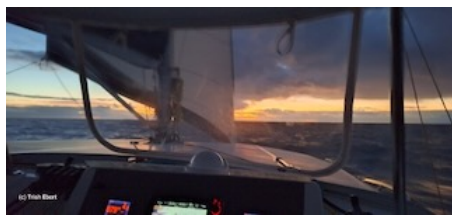


We had spits and spurts of decent wind all day, but we did wallow down to 2.5 knots under sail under my watch (less under Andrew's watch). Just as I was shutting the back during one of these times, in the dark, True wind shot up to 22 knots! All of a sudden boat speed was 8 knots! The ship I had been keeping an eye on on the screen was not going to get too near us now, I could turn off the wind and know I still had good boat speed.

'Marine Radio Victoria' read the forecast out over the radio. Had MetEye been updated? We now had no internet reception, so we had no updated indication before we were hit by the 20 knots.

The 1800 to 2100 shift had reasonably consistent winds and as we were now far enough south not to put 'rum lines' over land, I moved the Goto Point to give us a better idea of our final (hoped for) trajectory.





13th April 2024. At about 0150 the light from Wilsons Promontory disappeared behind Rotondo. It emerged again a bit over 10 minutes later. There were scattered clouds in the sky - I could see this because the moon was bright. Where I could see them - the stars were gorgeous!

I was trying to keep a tight angle to the wind but as the wind changed, my preferred direction changed, and at one point I made a decision to turn off the wind to sail between Curtis Island and Clarendon Rock. Of course, I couldn't see these obstacles - but the chart told me they were there. Then the wind changed again and I was going to miss them - then we were back to the original direction.

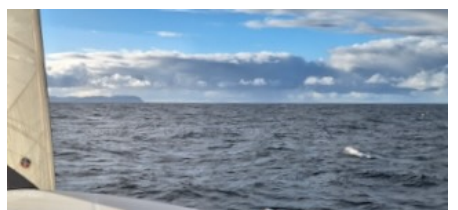
The night was a bit chilly but manageable (the back door was rolled up and open). I grabbed a blanket to wrap around my legs.

On his shift, Andrew managed to sway our direction back toward east and towards the north of the Kent Group.

As we approached the Kent Group I made the decision to go south of the islands before coming up on the eastern side. Our aim was Winter Cove. But at 0815 the wind changed again, and I headed back toward the north of the group. The strength increased and the sail was getting frisky. Andrew was off shift - and asleep. Then the wind changed again and I ended up going below the Island group after all. The wind picked up to 24 knots as we rounded West Bluff on Dover Island, and the Deal Island Lighthouse came into view. I got Andrew up to help me gybe. There was rain on the way.

At 0810 an albatross flew past. At 0822 it started to drizzle.

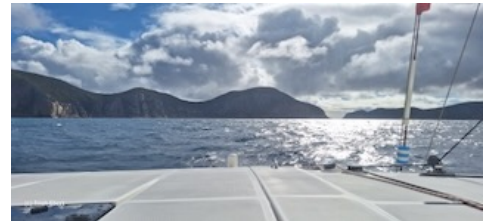
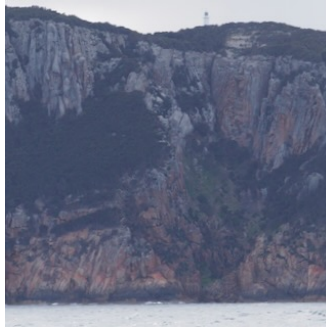
We dropped and furled the sails in the lee of Deal Island, and the rain started. It stopped just as we dropped the main and we motored toward shore in sunshine...and then just before we anchored it rained again. It wasn't the most



enjoyable end to a sail; my headset wasn't working so communication with Andrew consisted of yelling and hand signals, I had trouble removing the anchor chocks..(they had swollen with excessive moisture), and I was soaked with rain as well by the time I got back in the cockpit (a shower came down just as I was dropping the anchor). As I changed into dry clothes the rain stopped and Andrew asked for my help packing down the sail. It's a beautiful day, he said. Clearly it is all in the timing!

The anchor was down at 1130. We had small pancakes for lunch.

Wildlife that welcomed us into the bay included dolphins, pacific gulls, an Australasian gannet and a pied cormorant (?).





## To the Kent Group Museum

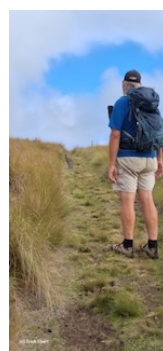
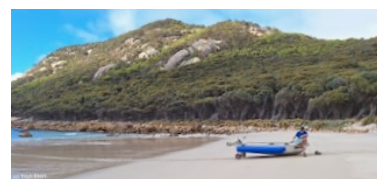
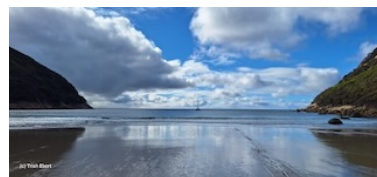
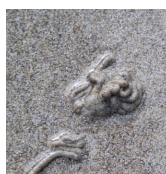
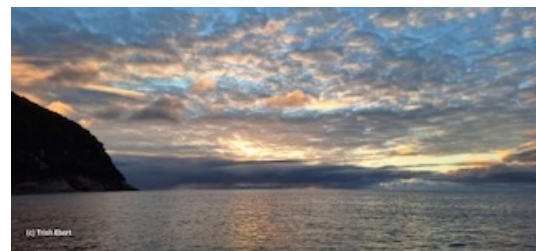
14th April 2024. Quiet. The slight swell that was with us last night was still here this morning. Clearly it had rained overnight a bit, but the most ominous cloud this morning was to our east. I got up around 0600. Whilst Andrew was still asleep I did some more of Project Deal (replacement of our helm station carry-all), and then decided I had made a mistake so unpinned it again, put the yoghurt in the fridge, made bread for breakfast, checked the predicted weather for today and the next few days, tidied some ropes, and contemplated a strange ship on the horizon. I heard one bird but didn't recognise the call.

Last night I changed my thoughts on the original idea about waiting for low tide before we headed to shore this morning (in order that the tinnie would get pushed up the beach), to perhaps leaving before low tide, and that way we had extended time before the tide got back to where we landed. But Andrew, having gone to bed late, didn't get up for the new idea to materialise. Low tide was around 0930. We left the tinnie on the beach just after 0930.

Earlier Andrew had seen me grab the tyre pump and had asked if we were using the wheels. Clearly he hadn't been watching the beach (admittedly a bit difficult with the front covers down - you would have to go outside to check). This was a surf beach, and although the slight swell had been minimal overnight, with breaking waves hitting the beach in an oncoming tide, I wanted the tinnie as far up the beach as possible.

When we got to the beach we hauled the tinnie up a long way. This was predominantly because most of the beach was close to flat, which meant that it wouldn't take much time for the tide level to cover most of it. Once we were satisfied as to the tinnie's location we put our walking shoes on and headed off (only to be temporarily turned around. The island is a biosecurity area, according to the notice, and the only snacks I had with us for what I assumed was to be a couple of hours ashore, were two apples. They got returned to the tinnie and we continued on our way).

Whilst putting our boots on we had been delighted with spotting four macropods on the slope in front of us. Once we started our walk we were further delighted to see more. And



then more. And then more! Granted they were not so obvious on the 'up' bit - a good part of the first 750 meters from the beach, but they were spotted around every corner we took after that; sometimes one, sometimes two, sometimes more. We saw most where the path transected through mid-sized grasses and shrubs, and less through where the track transected the forest. They were almost tame, and whilst most moved on before we got within a couple of feet, a couple just got to the side of the track and waited for us to pass. Adults were cute, juveniles were cuter!

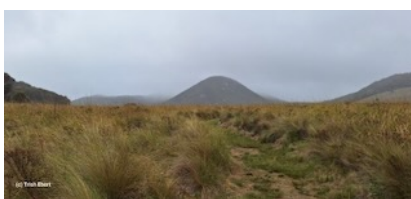
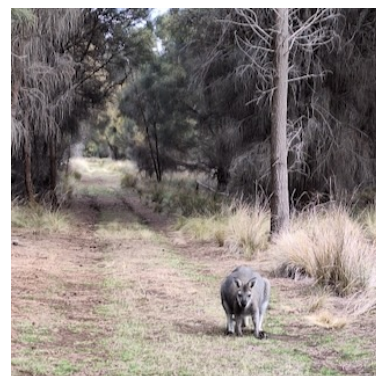
I didn't take exact note of how long it took to walk to the building compound and the museum - it wouldn't have been an accurate timing anyway, as we stopped to admire the wildlife along the way. Whilst there didn't seem to be a lot of birdlife, there was enough flitting around in the trees to keep us looking - although given their speed, and either the distance or the darkness of the foliage, identification was a hit-and-miss affair.

The museum is small, and only the ground floor is accessible. It has some old type cabinets with basic information, and some new, modern looking, interps panels. But this is probably the first museum where my critical sense hasn't picked anything out - I was far too interested in trying to read all the information in as short a time as possible because there were stronger winds predicted and I wanted to get back to boat by early afternoon.

The scenery was mixed; from coastal views to scrubby shallow valleys. All of it was new to us, and despite a bit of 'up' it was a delightful walk. Winter Cove is, according to information provided, four kilometres from the museum grounds. This means we

managed an eight kilometre walk from the beach and back, and despite taking respites on the way up the first hill, we both felt pretty good at the end of it.

On the way back rain threatened but mostly kept just short of falling on us - except for the last detour. There is a track labelled to Pegleg Bay. Someone in AllTrails has done a walk here with a bit of a loop. I assumed the person walked to a lookout point. As the access





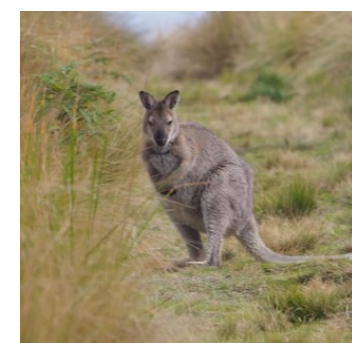
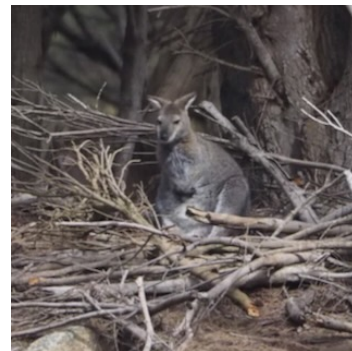


track is mown, only part of the track on the web was relevant - the picture loop not obvious, and the actual rough descending walking trail extending past the recorded track. We decided, given the time, and the weather, that we would abort this side track but we got wet getting back to the tinnie anyway.

The adventure did not finished once we got back to the tinnie! The surf beach was in full surf-mode and some waves were clearly bigger and more frothy than others. How were we going to get back? We were definitely going to get wet! We dragged the tinnie around to face the water and then dragged it in (it was still above the water line when we got back to the beach). The idea was to get it in enough water that Andrew could drop the engine and get it started before we got in. I was in up to the bottom of my shorts before the first really big wave came in. And then another. In the end I was soaked up to my waist before I got in. With both of us aboard we managed minimal water ingress over the next couple of waves, until two really big bundles of froth caught us straight on. I had thrown Andrew's boots under the lip at the bow of the boat. I hadn't got around to moving mine. Andrew's boots stayed dry from the surf. - mine were soaked, and I was now up to mid-chest wet with sea water. And the tinnie was a few kilos heavier with its new extra load. This got syphoned out before we got back to boat.

Upon coming down the slope to the beach we had spotted a pod of dolphins between the beach and Sengo. Presumably these were the same pod we had seen in the afternoon yesterday. And presumably they were feeding.

Once we had got past the breakers some of them took a break from feeding and came across to play with us. It was the most amazing experience. Getting wet was definitely worth this! We were circled, paralleled, cut in



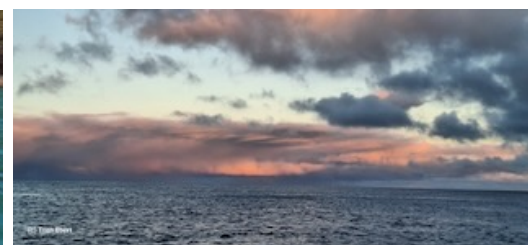
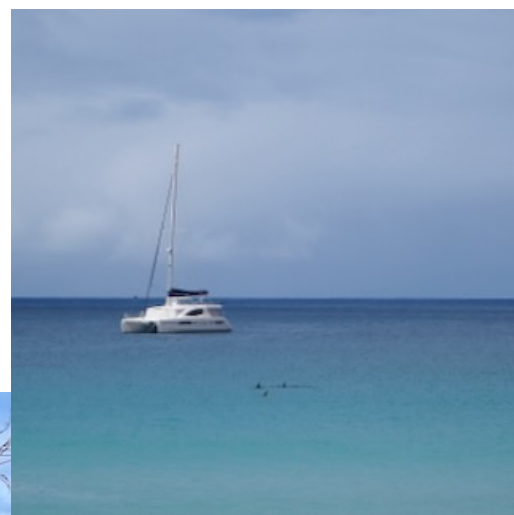


front of,  
a n d  
witness to  
jumping  
behaviour  
of several  
heights.

They were clearly having fun. Andrew wondered if they were looking for a bow wave but as we sped up just a bit to give them one they disappeared - I guess we were now too far away from the rest of the group... and the fish! Just before dusk five individuals came to say farewell as they left the bay.



Bird list: Pacific Gull, lapwing, flame robin, grey fantail, craven (forest)?, Martin (sp?), brown quail, Cape Barren Geese, pied cormorant?, penguins at dusk (not seen, heard coming into the cove. There were quite a few of them swimming in on both sides of the boat but it was too dark to see them. According to my bird identification App they could be one of several species).





## Winter Cove

15th April 2024. Up around 0700. Grey to the east, and drizzle occasionally throughout the morning. The dolphins came back around 1130, one breaking away from the group to come over to say hello, before returning to its pod. The sun was breaking through gaps in the clouds. Low tide had been at 1023 so we made water on the incoming tide.

Just as I was typing that a pied cormorant was the only bird we'd seen this morning, a pacific gull spotted by Andrew proved me wrong.

The dolphins stayed hunting at the beach all day, and at one point I noticed one breach completely - twice. They did make noise as they passed by on their exit around 1750, but they were too far east before we took to the back deck to wish them farewell. Around 50 minutes after this the penguins started to come in; again it was too dark to see them.

The weather was for slightly grumpy winds (at least too grumpy to get off boat). I spent the day on Project Deal; a lot of time spent measuring, cutting, sewing. Other actions that filled in time for us today - reading - and watching the Italian News (Winter Cove has internet access)).



## Winter Cove to Garden Cove

16th April 2024. While Winter Cove had some reasonable, but slow at times, internet reception, we found that Garden Cove, after we put the anchor down around 0945, had none. And we hadn't downloaded a Predict Wind this morning! We knew the TasMarineRadio broadcasts were scratchy where we had been; I hated to think what they are going to be like here. If you look at the marine forecast areas on the bom.gov.au website you find that the marine forecast area that Deal Island is in, is Victoria. - despite the fact it is Tasmanian territory!

There had been one AIS signal in this Cove since we had arrived in The Kent Group, and I was trying to get my head around the chart and where we might anchor before we headed across. When we arrived at Garden Cove there were two boats; a mono and a cat. After much yelling, and one resetting, we settled down to a minor roll at a distance that I deemed okay from the other boats, and Andrew was happier than our first attempt. Many would have gone closer.....

A pacific gull had loitered on the water for a while before our departure at Winter Cove, and we think a kestrel had flown by as we were about to lift anchor - (the gizz from below looked like a kestrel) - it landed on the cliff high above and was too far away to confirm.

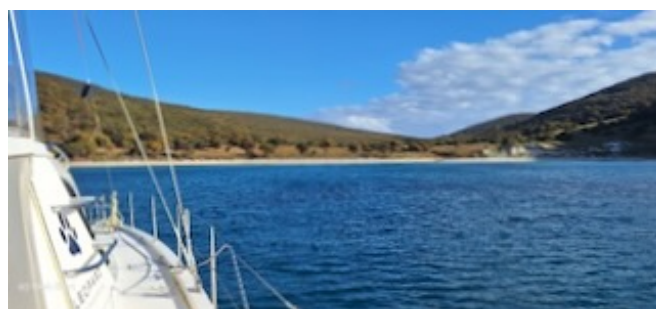
The forecasts that I had seen before we left Winter Cove had removed the slight north-east from both bom.gov.au and Windy.com - I hope the next forecast iterations don't put it back - we will be quite exposed. We have predicted 30 knots-plus (gusting to 40 ish according to Windy) on Thursday. It will be a day of anchor watch.



Rain had threatened as I lifted the anchor, it smattered our port side of the helm clears on the hour-long journey, but I didn't get wet putting the anchor down.

Shortly after we had anchored in Garden Cove and settled in for a cuppa we noticed the other two boats leaving. Was it something we said? We took the opportunity to move further in and anchored in just over 3 meters of water (it was around 10m last time), at 1045.

We did nothing else for the rest of the day but read and admire the scenery.





## The Deal Island Lighthouse

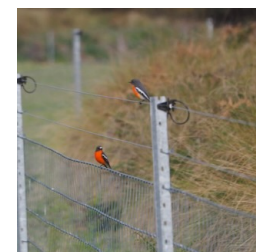
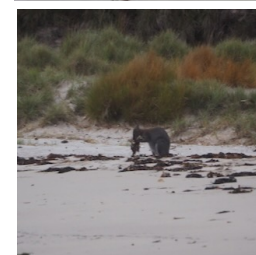
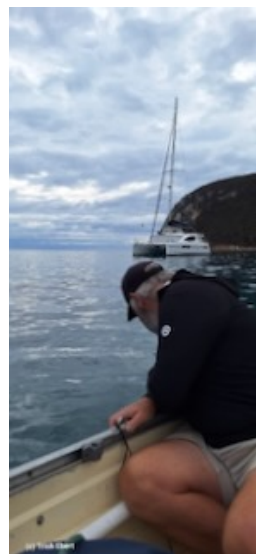
17th April 2024. At around 1830 I looked out the back door into the dark, and had a fit. There's a boat coming in. The green steaming light was very bright and I sent Andrew up into the helm to check where our anchor was. This boat had actually reached the Kent Group earlier in the day, and had headed, to my relief at the time, to West Bay. However, clearly it decided that next to us was going to be more suitable - but for me, not comfortable. It was a monohull, it looked big in the dark, and if I was the skipper, I would have been anchoring it behind (to the north of) us. Instead it made its way to park to our East; between us and the rocky shore!

As I had been expecting a late night anyway - the last MetEye we saw indicated the wind was going to pick up overnight - this was just going to present an extra stress. (Andrew had put a waypoint on our chart-plotter when he heard the boat drop its anchor so we could ascertain that they 'probably' wouldn't be an issue).

The rest of the day had been wonderful. I had gotten up around 0630. Andrew, slightly grumpy, got up around an hour later. We were on shore and walking away from the tinnie (after we had visually checked the anchor) at 0915. The walk from Garden Cove to the main building area and the Museum

is, as the notes indicate, easy. As per our walk from Winter Cove, the way was occupied by lots of small wallabies, which according to the caretakers, both of whom we met this morning, have probably just had a population explosion; when they turned up to start their stint, the island had been dry and the animals appeared emaciated. Now, thanks to some recent rain, the grasses are high and the animals look well.

From the building compound we headed to the Deal Island Lighthouse, arriving around 1115. After a rest, an early lunch (a bread loaf I had baked last night), and as there was internet access, a check of the latest MetEye wind predictions), we headed back again. We didn't head down to the 1943 airplane crash site. Neither did we take the loop track back that has one end of the track on the track to Squally Bay. The airplane crash site (some bits left apparently) we are not likely to see in the





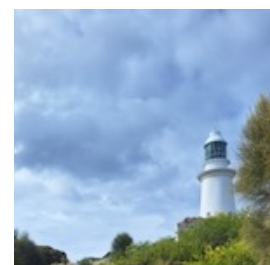
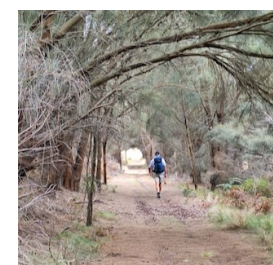
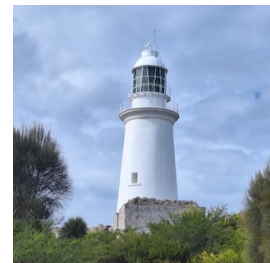
future (unless we particularly want to walk the 'hard' up to the lighthouse again), but we may get the enthusiasm to take the track to the Squally Bay one day.

At a further check, at another internet reception site near the airstrip (set up with a seat for convenience), we discovered that MetEye had been changed yet again!

Getting back to boat was another wet affair - at least for me as being in the front of the tinnie I copped the incoming crashing surf wave. Not every wave was crashing but Andrew was waiting for a big wave to get enough water to launch the tinnie - I am not sure why - the only thing it seemed to achieve was getting water inside the tender again.

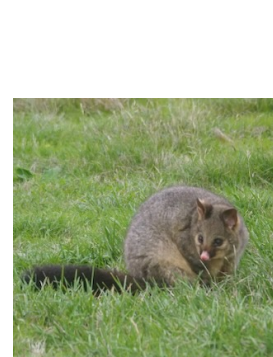
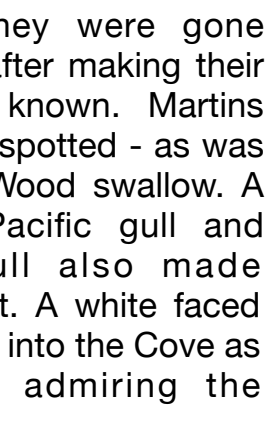
Back at boat the first thing we did was reset the anchor - I had not been totally happy with the set yesterday, and whilst it was clearly holding in light breezes, having inspected it this morning (the water was that clear) I was not convinced that it would hold in potentially 40-knot gusts. I was much happier with the set this afternoon - and I put an extra five meters out.

Birdlife wasn't exactly prolific but it was plentiful. There were lots of flame robins about, more females obvious than males. Grey fantails flitted about the trees, pipits and fire-tail finches were spotted on the airstrip, and the Cape Barren Geese spotted seemed to walk around in pairs; the pair on the airstrip doing a coordinated defence dance as we passed - both on the way to the lighthouse and on the way back. An intermediate white heron was also spotted on the airstrip, a pair of white bellied sea eagles on the cliffs near Sengo, lapwings on the beach, and we disturbed quite a few brown quail - photos were not possible as



usually they were gone seconds after making their presence known. Martins were also spotted - as was a Dusky Wood swallow. A craven, Pacific gull and silver gull also made today's list. A white faced heron flew into the Cove as we were admiring the dolphins.

After missing the dolphins last night I was delighted that they

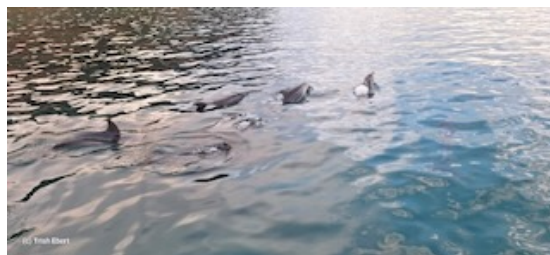
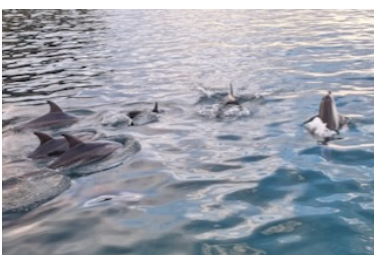
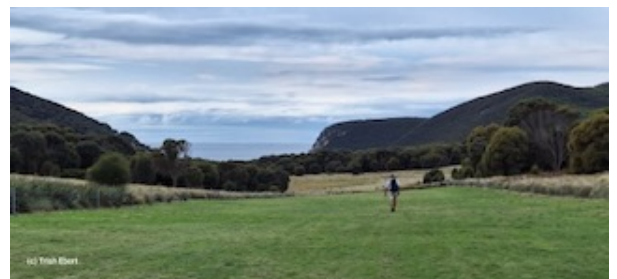




came in to this bay tonight. As usual they had a ball. It was a smaller group than in Winter Cove (or maybe it was just part of the Winter Cove group). They frolicked and fished, and occasionally jumped. They also seemed to make several deliberate swim-bys, with several individuals showing us their lovely white stomachs.

Mammals: humans, wallabies, and a stunned looking brush-tail possum on the airstrip. I don't know if he was suffering the effects of getting zapped with the electric fence trying to get over it, or a big bird had picked him up and dropped him (would have to have been a very big bird). Of course, he could have made his own way there (tunnel?, the electric fence has lines at the base and the top) and finding himself with no protection just went into statue mode when he saw us coming. He was very much aware of our presence. If he did make his own way there, I hope he can get out again.

The last bird calls of the night were the penguins, from both the outer east and west shore



## Garden Cove

18th April 2024. I woke up to a slightly jiggly boat but the wind hadn't been as strong as was predicted overnight. I hadn't sat a midnight vigil and when I woke, although the wind sounded up, the familiar jiggle of the bridge let me know that we were holding fast. The *Chimere* was still to our east and still at a good distance, given the marks on the chart plotter.

'I wonder what time the penguins go out in the morning?' I had asked Andrew last night as we were listening to a particularly raucous chorus. This morning I found out. I was up at 0530 - although admittedly I had gone to bed around 2000. My curiosity was our boat position - it didn't sound particularly windy outside, but looking at the very vague outline of the hill next to us I reasoned we were not facing in the direction I had expected us to, given the last forecast we had seen yesterday. Instruments on I determined our position was good and we were facing close to south, rather than the west I had expected. The AIS signal of the adjacent boat was still far enough away for me to feel comfortable. And the penguins were calling again. Ah Huh!

Rather than go back to bed I continued reading *The Forgotten Islands* by Michael Veitch, his tome about his visits to some of the Bass Strait Islands, including The Kent Group

A very light drizzle started around 0630, but the wind, although light, was strong enough to move my rain water collecting bucket.

The wind didn't make a great appearance all day. At one point it was blowing 1.1 knots. Where was the 20 to 25 to 30 knots we were expecting? Granted the forecast may have changed - we hadn't had a MetEye sighting since around 1300 yesterday but...

After a mixed morning of low to middling wind (at one point from the north!), and a jiggly swell, eventually 'Huey' started to blow. Admittedly we never caught the top of the gust on the chart-plotter - but we did see 23 knots!

Two of the crew from the boat next door came across to say hello on their way to shore for a walk. One of them is a member of CYCV and has been thinking about updating the



Cruising Guide we are currently using. I did invite them over for an afternoon cuppa later, if the seas were tenable (thinking there were four on board - listening to the radio later we worked out there were at least five). But they moved early afternoon back to West Cove. Admittedly it was a bit jiggly here at the time, and they were in a mono, but I am not sure how West Cove would be good for south-easterlies.

Around the same time as last night but it wasn't quite dark yet I looked out the window and noticed a lit-up boat just to our north-east. What is it with boats arriving at this time? Are they back, we wondered. On closer inspection we found a fishing boat, with its nav light on and the decks alight. I wonder if they had the deck lights on because they weren't on AIS. According to the Island Caretaker, she is required to list all the boats in the anchorages at night - the only way of doing this easily is electronically, and I suspect she has a receiver. That only works of course, if the boats have AIS and she can see them!

Given the expected conditions there was no point trying to get off boat today. Andrew spent the day ensconced in a novel. I did read a bit, perusing *Cruising Victoria* and *The Forgotten Islands*, but I also rinsed most of the salt soaked clothes from yesterday and hung them out to dry, gathered 800 photos together to put on our electronic photo frame (from the Kimberley trip last year and the reason we invigorated the use of an electronic photo frame), and continued on Project Deal.

Around 2130 I was feeling a bit ill. I am not sure if it was something I ate or, by this time in the evening, the constant slight jiggling of the boat (there were times we really noticed the north east swell). I went to bed at this time. Andrew got to bed around an hour later.

## Garden Cove to Garden Cove!

19th April 2024. I had several aborted starts at getting up this morning. I didn't have the alarm on, and every time I woke up and thought I could see the sky lightening I checked my watch; first at 0430, then 0515 and finally at 0615. The weather report we were waiting for, if we could hear it (they had been very scratchy and basically unintelligible) was due at 0648. As expected, when it did come, it was unintelligible, and the only way to get an accurate weather forecast (is that an oxymoron?) was maybe to pick up anchor and head to where we knew we could get reception, even if we then turned around and came back to this, or a passageway, anchorage. I waited until Andrew was up to discuss this option. At 0700 the wind speeds, according to our gauges, were in the high 0s to low to mid teens... the wind sounded worse outside than our instruments were reading, although clearly there had been some strength at one point overnight - our anchor ball was now in two pieces!



Today didn't quite go to plan. The forecasts a few days ago had suggested today's winds and conditions might be nice for a walk. The forecasts two days ago at a final check suggested the walking opportunity had dissipated. Being in a 'no reception' zone we hadn't had an update. Given what we had, we were expecting the winds to change to the south-west and then west mid afternoon-ish. With the hope of a change of scenery we picked the anchor up (with a bit of frustration as the anchor chain lock had looped onto another section of chain) and headed around the corner to West Bay off Erith Island. We moved too soon! The other yacht in the area had moved to East Bay, well protected from the winds this morning, but not those we were expecting to come in later. We sussed out a spot at West Bay, decided the current fetch (late morning) was too uncomfortable, motored across to East Bay to test the conditions there, and decided that wasn't for us either. We didn't want to be too close to the existing anchored yacht, and we couldn't see any clear patches of sand close enough to the shore for our liking.

So, we turned around and motored back to where we had begun. I was reading later that I motored past a spot known for seals (I hadn't noticed any as we motored past, but I wasn't looking for them). The conditions back in Garden Cove were much nicer than along the side of Murray Channel between the islands anyway. The weather conditions were unfortunately as per our original expected forecast; perfect for a walk - but by the time we had re-anchored and got distracted the day got away from us (I only thought later we



could have gone to shore this afternoon to check the internet about a kilometre up the track).

There was a positive though - we saw an albatross (it had dark wings and could be one of several species) and a black faced cormorant was surprised at our reappearance as he emerged from Garden Coves' waters. A large dark bird of prey was also spotted flying about (unidentified), as was a silver gull working the shore line. Yesterday we didn't notice the dolphins nor hear the penguins. The same went for today. Until I heard the subdued cries of the penguin rookery around 1840.

By 1700 the wind still hadn't changed from south-east. Discussions had gone from a 'definite move to Winter Cove' tomorrow to a 'let's get around the corner, get some internet reception and perhaps sail to Prime Seal Island' in the Furneaux Group.

My afternoon activity was sewing some stabilising tabs on our new helm storage 'container.' As well as recreational and educational reading.

The only message that came through vaguely clearly from Marine Radio Victoria was a securitae regarding a washed-up whale carcass near the entrance to Port Albert!

## Deal Island to Prime Seal Island.

20th April 2024. I woke at 0315...and it was a couple of hours before I got back to sleep. I got up for the day at 0645. The anchor was up at 0720. According to our gauges there was no wind. 0.00! I got the camera out to record this - of course the gauges changed - 2.1 when I took the shot.

We motored around the corner to get reception. Wind was north-west - this was not forecast. On a plus side the transmission of the weather forecast on the radio this morning was clearer.

At 0820 we put the sails up. The wind wasn't good enough, but given the Hogan Is observations, we knew the wind was coming, and Andrew's idea of putting the spinnaker up would not have lasted long given the expected wind angle. One engine went off and we settled down with a cuppa to await slightly stronger winds.

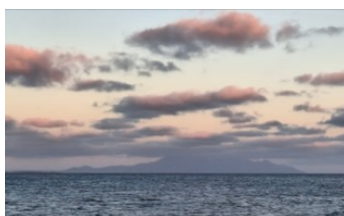
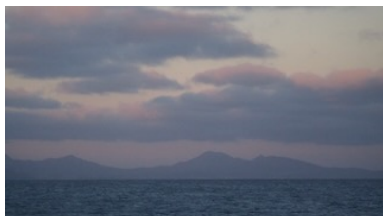
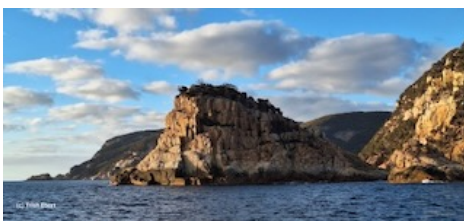
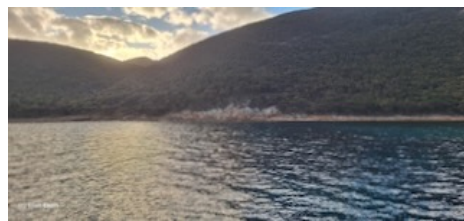
The second engine went off at just before 0900 and we were sailing on our rum line between 5 and 6 knots in a south-easterly direction. The wind was westerly; 10 to 12 knots True. Apparent around 10 knots. Tide assistance around 0.1 knot.

At 1000 we passed Endeavour Reef. The last time I saw Endeavour Reef on the chart was when we passed it on a perpendicular course from the Tamar River heading north - in 2018!

We didn't see many birds until we got closer to the Furneaux Group. Leaving Deal Island we had seen a gannet, a white-faced heron and one albatross. As we approached the Furneaux Group, albatrosses, terns, and small dark (possibly) shearwaters, were in good numbers, and as we came into the passage between Prime Seal Island and Flinders Island an albatross was spotted every couple of minutes - as well as one black-faced cormorant.

The sails were dropped just after 1430. We had seen over 23 knots on the gauges.

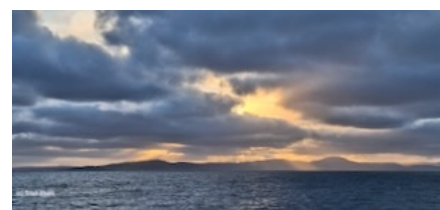
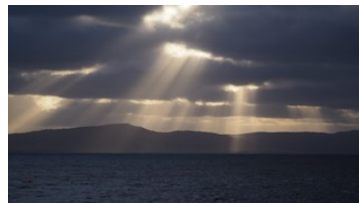
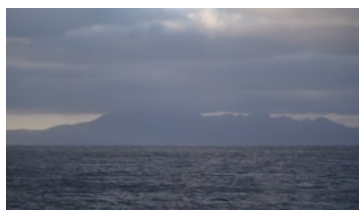
We picked up one of the two moorings at 1500.





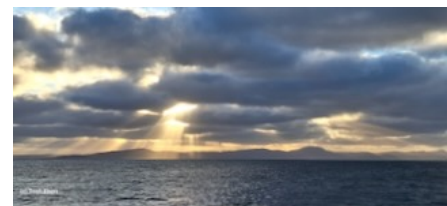
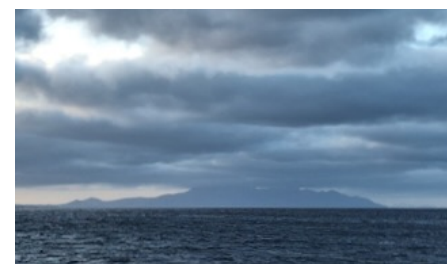
## Prime Seal Island

21st April 2024. The first bird I saw this morning was an albatross. Crepuscular rays were showing through the clouds to our north-east, and the top of Mount Strzelecki was in cloud. It was 0715. The forecast for 20-25 winds had come in.



'Weather Hobart' does their broadcast at 0745 - and we can hear it clearly. Today the reader was a female. Weather Hobart broadcasts all forecasts - including land forecasts - we weren't particularly interested in the 'Western Districts.'

We didn't do much. It was quite chilly and too windy to get off boat - and the adjacent Island is listed as private property on the MAST website, and visitors are asked not to land. I do note that at this date however the island (or rather the remaining six years of a twenty-year farming lease) are for sale - the sale comes with six years operation time, buildings, equipment and stock (sheep).



The mono we had seen at The Kent Group made its way into Lady Barron today. We didn't move. We read a lot and I did some road-trip write-up. We had good internet so we also watched the Italian News..

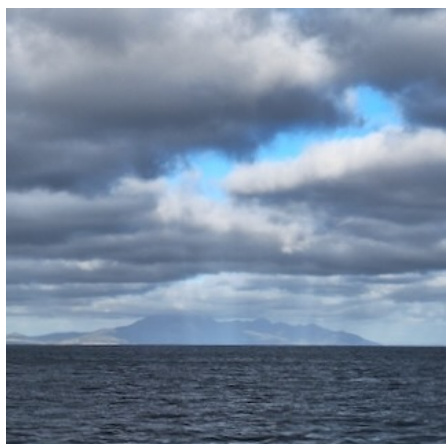


We also spent some time regularly checking weather predictions and working out where we wanted to go for the next big blow.

Breakfast was yoghurt, lunch was pancakes with left over turkey, and dinner was warm beef salad.

Birds: Black-faced cormorant, a couple of terns, lapwings on the beach. 'Mixed species on a rock in the distance.

As predicted winds ranged between 20 to 25 knots.



## Prime Seal Island to Badger Island (and back again!)

22nd April 2024. The past couple of nights have been the calmest I have ever experienced on a mooring. Or perhaps that is because we had some wiggly anchor experiences at the Kent Group.

MetEye changed again. Predicted wind speeds have dropped. We are still going to get grumpy weather (in the middle of the night!) But not for long. Where we are going today we are going to be exposed briefly to the north, but it is 'blues' rather than 'greens' or 'yellow's and hopefully, with 2 plus m expected swell we don't get too much of it. Non-the-less I do expect some jiggling.

Andrew checked the port engine just as we started to move - it has been losing coolant and we didn't know why. This morning he found a leak. Problem ascertained - now we just had to fix it. Given the diagnoses, this engine was turned off almost immediately after we departed Prime Seal Island.

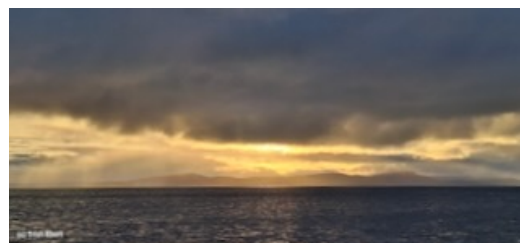
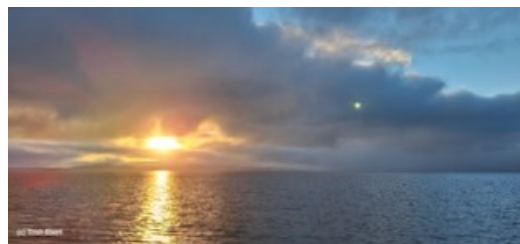
The mooring was dropped at 0750 and we motored south-east. The genoa was put out at 0800 with 7 knots True. The sum log had clogged up and was not working so we were probably getting a better apparent wind speed.

The remaining engine was turned off at 0820.

Albatrosses and gulls were the birds seen on our trip south.

There was not much to see of Flinders Island this today; it was almost continually clouded in from when I got up.

At 0920 I noticed a sail on the horizon to our south.. the sail a. Bright white thanks to the sun shining through the clouds. I could see the islands we were going between, from this distance both a mustard yellow. Some of the earlier cloud to the east had lifted and the outline of all but Mt Strzelecki could now be



seen of Flinders Island. There were however, looking around, still patches of rain falling.

We got to our preferred destination for the coming blow and started to work out where we wanted to anchor - there is a lot of weed here and we needed to find a sand patch in which to put the anchor.



One and a half hours later - and four to five attempts, we were no closer to settling in for the night. We were unaware of any anchorage listed in the guides that had the coverage angles that Badger Island did - except the one where we had come from - yet Prime Seal Island, according to forecasts was due to get the grumpier winds over the next few days. Not wanting to try anywhere we didn't know in the dark - and we certainly didn't want to deal with weed in the dark, we reversed our journey and headed back to where we had come from this morning. Like this morning most of the journey was under sail (except the last half hour where given the time and the setting sun we put the engine on to hopefully get back on the mooring before dark).

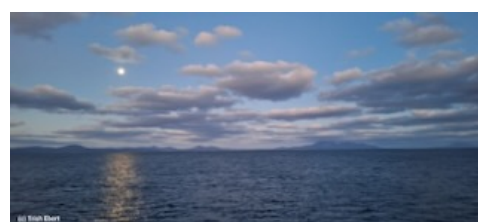
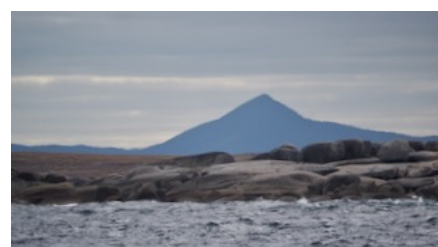
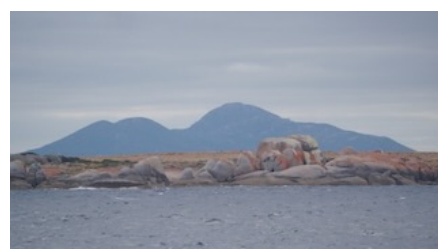
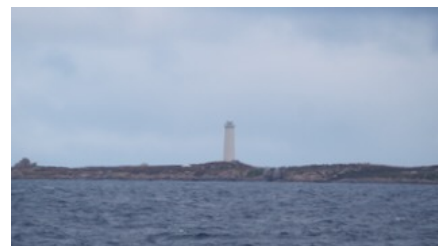
Official sunset at Whitemark (just opposite the strait from us on Flinders Island) was 1728. The mooring was secured at 1748. The moon was up and shining on the water to our east, but it wasn't dark enough to be seen in all its glory.

I spent the evening on the Road Trip notes.

Breakfast: Yoghurt.

Lunch: pancakes (underway on a reasonably rocky sea).

Dinner: salmon and veggies.

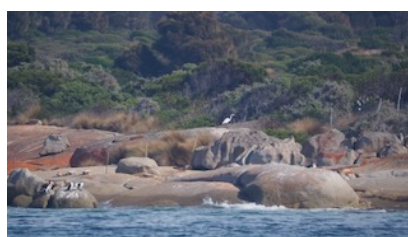
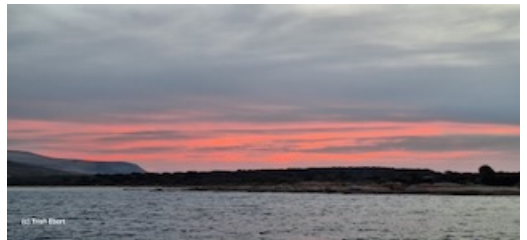
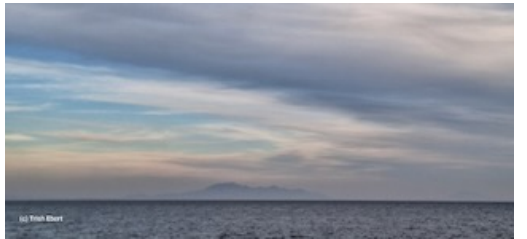
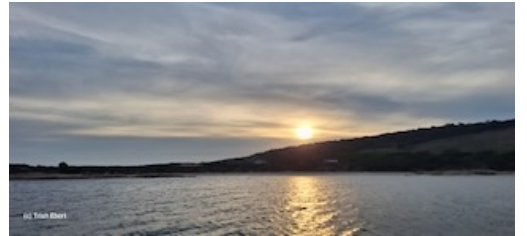


23rd April 2024. I had lots of little jobs booked to do today. Simple, overdue tidy-ups mainly. The sun was fully up when I woke up. But Flinders Island was behind a screen of haze. The boat was facing north.

On the shore birds clucked (Cape Barren Geese?) and a gull (it was too far away to determine if it was Pacific or Kelp) walked the rocks along the shore.

We watched the outside weather closely. We knew the blow was coming but the MetEye prediction from 0529 didn't get updated until after 1800. By which time the wind had picked up. Andrew volunteered to take first shift.

Diary notes - for January, February and March - are happening slowly and in small tranches.





24th April 2024. On the plus side today - the wind kept the clouds from settling on the top of Mount Strzelecki. I had been up since 0410. My shift. It wasn't our usual shift pattern - Andrew offered to keep going until he could go no more - although that was probably influenced by the fact there was an American Baseball game on YouTube that he hadn't caught up with. This meant however, when he did go to bed, he had been up for around 20 hours!

I had had an interrupted sleep; partially due, I think, to my subconscious expecting to be woken up at any minute over night and so, even though I went to bed at 2000 last night, I got one solid hour before checking Andrew, then another solid hour before checking Andrew, and then two hours and so on.

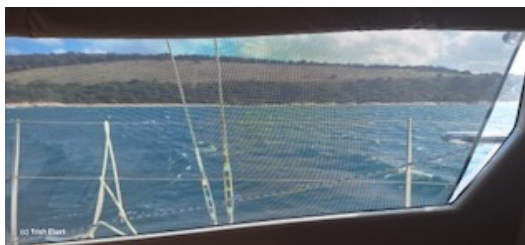
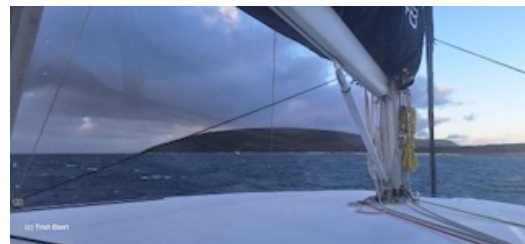
Andrew hadn't seen more than 37 knots on the gauges (gust) and by 1000 I hadn't seen more than 38 (also a gust); which was fortunate as the MetEye update at 0540 increased our oranges to dark reds for this morning's 0700 tranche - this colour represents wind speeds of 35 to 45 knots. The readings at Hogan Island and Wilsons Prom were in excess of this well before 0700!

When there are white caps inshore of you- you know it is windy!

We were at regular points in time, marking the chart plotter with our position. This was to mainly ensure that we weren't dragging - the mooring doesn't really have a capacity limit (they have a 'length' listed on their websites but that is irrelevant when the actual 'capacity' you need is a 'force' rating). The mooring was holding nicely - the chart plotter showed a lovely semi circle of marks - and when I went up just after 0600 I could see twilight coming in. I could also see another anchor light - a fisherman had come in overnight - anchored to our south west.

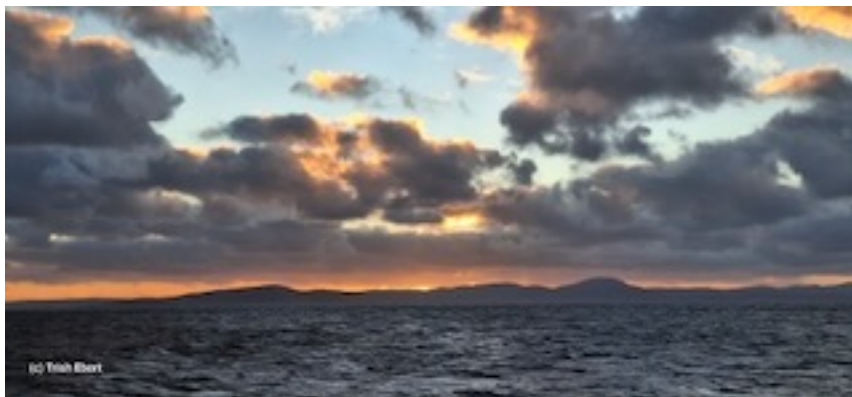
Andrew got up at 1015.

One black backed gull kept me amused for a minute (unknown if Pacific or Kelp) flying against wind - admittedly our gauges were reading only around 20 knots at the time.



We had a late breakfast. And then an early lunch (last night's left overs) and then had pancakes for dinner (easy). I spent the day on the computer and reading.

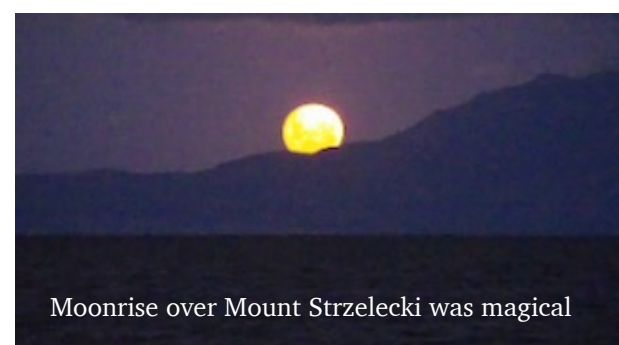
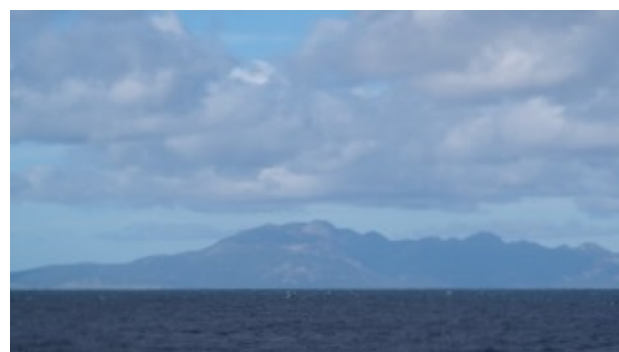
A couple of youngsters from the fishing boat came over in their very large tinnie to say hello - this was the fishing boat that had joined us briefly one night in Garden Cove on Deal Island.



25th April 2024. It was only after I took the photo of the sun behind the clouds coming over the horizon that I realised it was Anzac Day. I didn't need to be quiet for the Dawn Service... there was no one to speak to; Andrew was still fast asleep after his last shift. Thankfully he had gone to bed earlier than yesterday morning - an almost respectable 0130, so when I noticed the sun coming up over Flinders Island, I had been on shift for just over five and a half hours.

Overnight winds had blown, in the main, from mid twenties to low thirties - although there was the occasional and brief lull under twenty knots. I had been contemplating the predicted wind and wondering whether it was time to cut our losses and come back to this group of islands at another time - as far as the current MetEye was concerned we were to have one-and-a-half to two, half reasonable, days before another blow. I thought about broaching this with Andrew when he got up, but further investigation up the coast indicates predictions may not be all that good up there for us either. Yet to be determined. Forecasts change.

I had spent the early morning on diary notes, searching the internet, paying bills and reading James A Michener's 'Alaska.' It is a big book - and it will take me a while.





## Cutting our losses!

### Heading north to Lakes Entrance

26th April 2024. Decision made!. We do realise that autumn is not the best time to explore the islands around northern Tasmania in Bass Strait - but it was worth a try since we were 'in the neighbourhood'. But with the blow we had just experienced, and Bass Strait's reputation, and, no guarantee of any better weather in the oncoming week, we decided to 'get out of Dodge'.

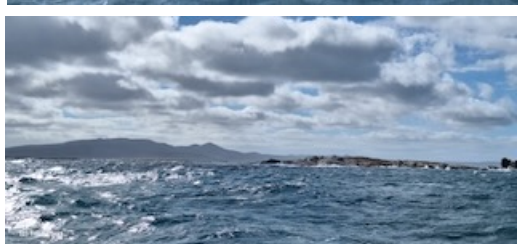
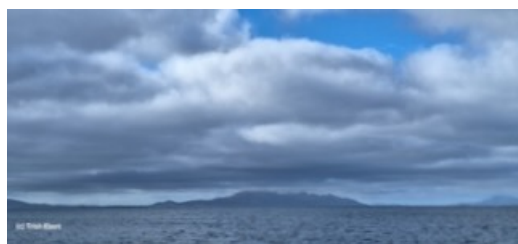
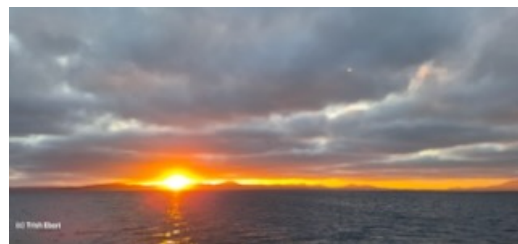
So, after Andrew cleaned the sum log, the mooring was dropped, and the main was up at 1030. The genoa was out a couple of minutes later. The forecast was for 15 to 20 knots but at this time the wind was blowing 25-plus, with spotted gusting at higher speeds. And we still had island protection!

Albatross', shearwaters, and a sea eagle flew past. Terns and gannets were also spotted.

We had kept the first reef in the main from our first foray into Bass Strait, but we put a reef in the genoa as well. We were sailing close to the wind and it wasn't until we turned around Cape Frankland and Boyes Rock that we could turn off the wind for a more comfortable sail.

The entire trip, despite the 15 to 20 knot predicted wind speeds, entertained us with 20 to 25 knot winds. Side swell was a good 2 to 3 meters (usually a swell height we avoid) and by the end of the trip we were covered in salt.

I base my journey planning on 5 knots boat speed. I usually expect six knots (depending on winds and conditions), and any speeds greater than that are a bonus. But this trip was just too quick; we averaged, in the main, nine, ten and eleven knots. The result - we



were too fast, and with the angle sailed to make it comfortable, we ended up too far to the east.

27th April 2024. When I took over shift at midnight we had passed through the area of the oil rigs, and Andrew had turned the boat into the wind - very sharply - to slow it down. His instructions to me handing the helm over were to 'manage' the rest of the trip. i.e. 'sail sloppy.' Fortunately the wind speed had dropped (as we had expected it to: the forecast for this time was, thankfully, correct), and the sea-state was a much more comfortable proposition. I turned the boat further into the wind - I was trying (and achieved in the most part) to get the boat speed down to less than two knots. We had a bar to cross, we had to cross it at the right spot in the tide, and we wanted to do it in the light!

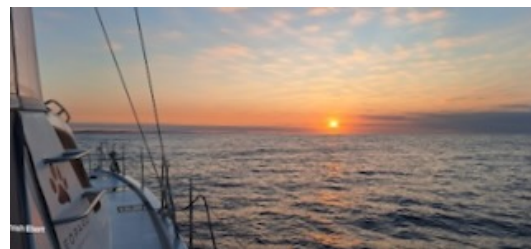
The moon was still full(ish) and watching the moon come up from behind the clouds..(almost looked full) was lovely but not as mesmerising as last night when it had emerged from behind Mount Strzelecki.

I hadn't bothered organising meals for this trip - dinner had been the dehydrated meals that had been excesses from our aborted NZ walking trip at the beginning of last year.

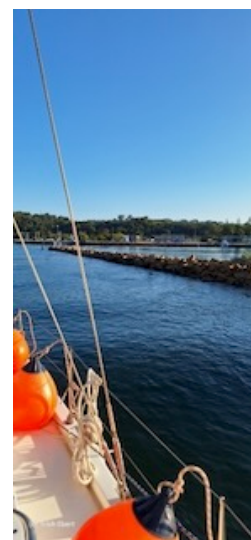
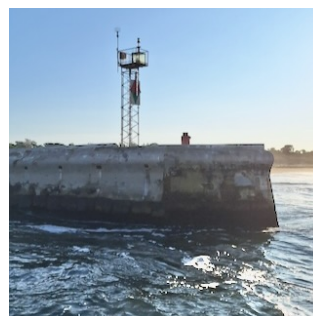
Given the timing of our preferred bar crossing for the latter half of the trip, rather than three hours on and off Andrew got four hours sleep before we entered Lakes Entrance - and I got two. It didn't matter in the end - anxiety is a good condition to help wake oneself up.

The first bird spotted this morning was a tern - flying past in the morning light at 0622. We wound the genoa in, turned around and very slowly headed toward the entrance; we were 4 nautical miles to the Entrance - we needed to sail at 2 knots to get there on time. It was 0625! It was about this time I discovered our back mat... it was soaked, and it had moved toward the edge of the boat....

T\*, a mono, had been battling the same conditions from a completely different angle - they had come from the west, also sailing too fast for the journey and also having to sail sloppily to slow down for the entrance. They crossed first. We followed



It was an easy trip through the Entrance. Black faced cormorants, pelicans, and swans lined the rock wall sides. Unlike our last exit from here in December though, we saw no seals.



Bulmer Jetty- where we had tied up last year, already had two boats on it. Andrew thought we could fit. One of the boat's owners came out to help - but he didn't know how to tie off (what is it with boaties and small boats and not being able to tie off securely). I did get a bit cranky with him. I did apologise later.

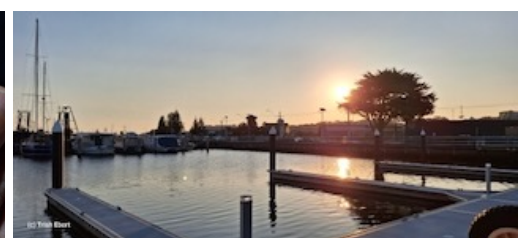
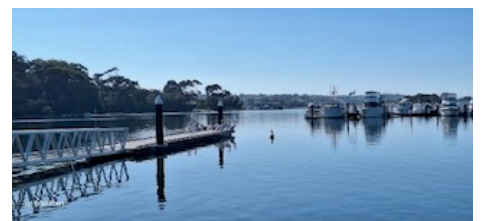


Half awake we chatted to people on dock, (including a fellow looking at a leopard 43 pc), went for a walk to stretch the legs (we hadn't been off boat for a week!), and got back for a cuppa before we organised the rest of the day.

Unfortunately I was a bit too gung-ho. In order to get ready for shopping I managed to drop one of the front hatches on my right big toe. There was a scream (or two). There was blood. There was bandages involved and I am surprised there was no fractured bone. I hobbled to lunch in thongs - they were the only shoes I could wear.

We did end up going shopping (we were almost out of fresh food). Andrew was lagging so we didn't do anything else. I had an afternoon snooze and then did a basic rub-down wth fresh water of our stanchions and most of the helm clears (that i could reach).

In the evening we watched the Italian News and I edited a bit of some of the diary notes. I went to bed around 2100.



## There's not much you can do when 'hobbled.'

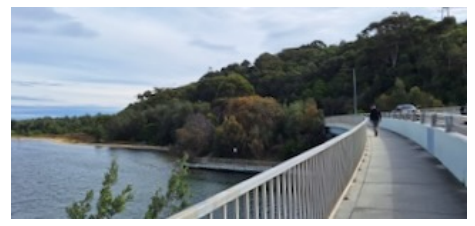
28th April 2024. I got up and hobbled to the public toilet - eventually. The first thing I discovered was that the back rope holding the back of the boat close to the dock, had come undone - I couldn't get off boat! I managed, after some silent grunt work (I didn't want to wake Andrew up), to fix this and get to my destination.

This morning we discovered the freezer was not working. Last time we made this discovery we had to replace a lot of the internals and workings and it cost us a lot of money - granted it was when we were in Geraldton and there weren't a lot of alternative options available for us to deal with the situation. This situation caused a repurposing on the fridge downstairs - and a forced defrosting.

I cleaned the salt off the door mats and wiped the salt off the floor of the front cockpit (which despite the covers being on was a white and grotty mess). We restocked some tinnie fuel and swapped one bottle of gas, and in the evening we took our evening stroll wandering further into the Cunningham Arm; or rather, I hobbled into the Cunningham Arm. We got back to boat just before sundown.



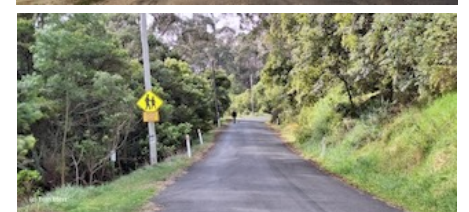
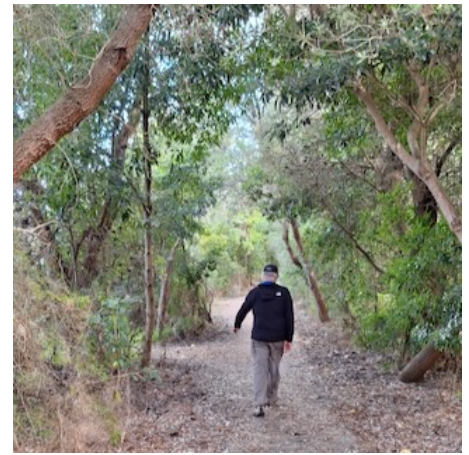




### A reminisce - that wasn't!

29th April 2024. The first time I visited Lakes Entrance I was with a girlfriend from College. Before reaching town she had driven us to lunch at the Kalimna pub. It was here that I was introduced to my first chicken parmigiana. So with the idea of a walk and a reward in mind, I suggested to Andrew we could walk to the Kalimna pub, have lunch and if we were a bit tired afterward, we could take the courtesy bus back. The website looks up to date. The only thing it mentions that might be out of whack is that the camping ground is closed. Well, maybe that was just our interpretation, as when we got to the pub, both the pub *and* the camping ground were closed. There were a couple of vehicles around - but the notice on the door was clear. What do we do now. It wasn't exactly late in the day but there were no other eateries around.

So, we walked up to Jemmys Point to use the public toilets, and walked back to Lakes Entrance via the main road to have lunch in the hotel that we had had lunch in when we got here a couple of days ago. Unfortunately the kitchen had closed by the time we got to dessert. Andrew was not impressed; I got something sweet at Woolies to compensate.



## Lakes Entrance to Duck Arm

30th April 2024. I watched (indeed waited) for what I thought was a swan whisperer this morning - a man herding a pair of swans and their offspring from city streets, down our jetty and into the water. Unfortunately this was an action that resulted in tragic results. The swans, I am guessing, belonged to the other arm (North Arm) and this 'good Samaritan' led these birds into the territory of another adult pair of swans. It was tragic to see one adult try to drown the cygnet of the newcomers. I don't know what happened in the end - the cygnet was temporarily safe but I don't want to know the result.

We took an early easy walk this morning - my foot was feeling better, although the wound had bled into the bandage over the past day. We had a look at shops we hadn't seen before, popping into the independent grocer to see if there was anything in there that I couldn't get in Woolies (there wasn't but it is always worth checking) and then into a chemist to see if we could get a flu jab. We couldn't at that establishment but the chemist next to Woolworths was offering the service (of which we availed).

Finally we were back at boat. We were off dock at 1145 and had to negotiate our way around the dredge Tommy Norton before heading towards Reeves Channel. We motored all the way; the wind wasn't conducive to sailing but we also wanted more control. We have two versions of Navionics on board; one is a very old version and has little detail. Unfortunately this is the main chart plotting system on boat and we did get to 0.00 under the keel before getting into clearer water (the version on our tablet is more up to date but we do



need to get a proper update next time we do our boat maintenance).

Lunch consisted of gluten free bread and cold meats on the passage.

We picked up a mooring in Duck Arm (there is no lead rope on these moorings and it is an exercise in contortion to get our ropes on), west of Paynesville, at 1515.

Birds: Pelican and great egret flybys this morning at Lakes Entrance. Spoonbills were spotted upon exit of Cunningham Arm. Other birds for the day: flock of little black cormorants, raft of coots, pelicans, pied cormorants

Once we had stopped I was hoping to open the boat up to let fresh air in - it was cloudy but some sun was coming through (there was no obvious rain in the area) but Andrew said he was cold, so whilst I opened the front covers to let the light in, the doors to the cabin remained shut.

We heard bush birds from shore in the evening. Other than that all was quiet.

