

# Aboard Sengo



## Into the Wild Blue Yonder!

Making our way back out to sea.

### WILD BLUE YONDER

What a relief

### WESTERNPORT

Or Western Port  
Or Western Port Bay

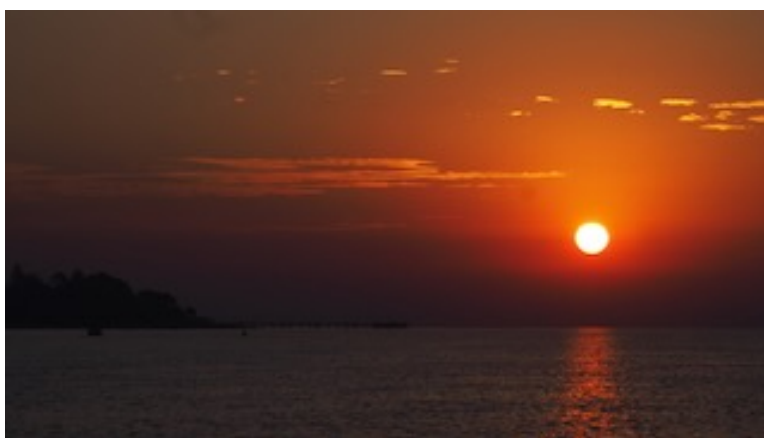
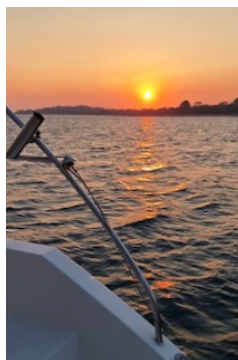
### FRENCH ISLAND

Our first landing

## Back Aboard Sengo

After a four-week road trip into the bottom south-east corner of South Australia, we arrived back aboard Sengo just in time for the March long weekend public holiday. It was time to get the boat ready to leave dock... if the weather would let us.

When we did leave there was a couple of days of prep (and waiting for the weather) before we could exit The Heads. We didn't get far - we made our first foray into Westernport Bay. Or is it Western Port Bay. Or is it just Westernport/ Western Port. Having just read a guide that talks about Port Phillip (not Port Phillip Bay as I knew growing up), I am not so sure what to label the waterways anymore. I can't be too grumpy, I am the only person I know who refuses to use 'Sydney Harbour' and instead refers to the waterways around the capital of New South Wales as Port Jackson!



Nomenclature for the waterways may not be consistent over this document.

We started the month on dock at Wyndham Harbour, Port Phillip (Bay). We finished the month anchored at the top of French Island in Western Port Bay (Westernport/Western Port).

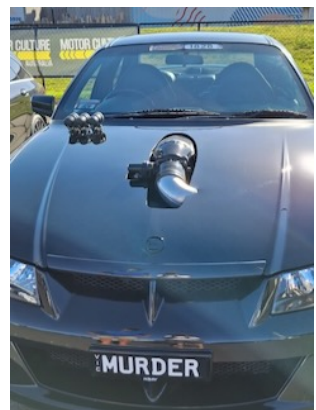
## A Very Hot Long Weekend

9th, 10th and 11th March 2024

9th March 2024. 'Cars and Culture?' That was the event label at the Marina Grounds today. There were lots of cars. But we couldn't work out exactly what they meant by 'culture'. Andrew's explanation was that 'it was a group of people who got together to celebrate ICE' (Internal Combustion Engines).

Some of the cars were classic - I loved the old rounded ute (50s maybe), and the old chevvie, but most cars were my era - seventies and eighties with a couple of HSV's. Andrew commented a couple of times (to the air) that there were no electric vehicles - and just after voicing this a second time, a Tesla drove past! We gave it a clap but I don't think anyone else did - we doubt it was part of the show; it's presence a *gossamer* link to the rest of the participants.

The afternoon was spent hunkering inside - it was too hot to do anything outside.



10th March 2024. For those into *heliolatory*, today would have been perfect. For us however...like yesterday, today was also too hot to do anything...We did a lot of reading. And we did go shopping (the air conditioning in the car and the shopping centre appreciated). I started a stocktake of linen closet



11th March 2024. 'Still too hot to do much. I spent most of the day reading. I did however, manage to 'almost' finish the linen closet stocktake. I also managed a load of washing but ended up throwing a couple of Andrew's clothing items in the dryer that shouldn't have been there - I now have two new items of clothing - he has two less!

In short bursts outside I managed to wash the *patina* of grime off the gunwales and flat deck on the port side of the boat. Andrew dug out bits of sealant to be replaced.







12th March 2024. Cooler. Rain wasn't in the forecast...but rain it did...albeit it was only light when we came in from working on the deck at around 1030. Andrew had been gouging out some more sealant. I had been doing a stanchion rust run. I had also chatted to a trawler-man who was in charge of taking a school group out sailing... the benefactors of the coloured plastic boats that are stacked up on the dock behind us.. Breakfast had been pancakes, with banana and maple syrup to deal with the softening banana. My pre-breakfast outside task had been cutting up the discarded bedding from the linen closet stocktake to go into rags.

We were back out on deck before 1100. Andrew continued the gouging and cleaning of today's lot of sealant areas. Me - on a further rust run. Boat jobs never end -it's a wonder we don't have *trichotilomania*! We came in for lunch; spicy mince in cos leaves.

And then back out again...for clean up, metho, masking tape and sealant. Whilst the past three days have been hot...(it was too hot to do much work), today has been cool, and annoyingly, more windy than preferred. But we can't wait for the wind; we potentially have a lot of sealing to do and tomorrow has rain predicted.

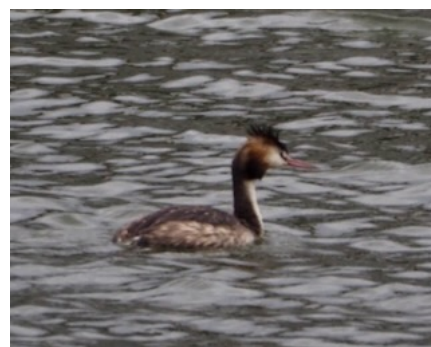
We managed - after some swearing by Andrew regarding his tools (and yes, in this case it was the tools) to put sealant back into the four areas we had prepared.

I got one load of washing done.



It rained again at 2130. We noted that yesterday we were sweating with minimal clothing and had only a sheet covering us overnight. This evening we were in tracksuit pants and slippers and would be sleeping with a doona!

Evening jobs included sorting out our health insurance, and we watched a movie before going to bed



13th March 2024. I was up before 0800. It was grey outside. It was quiet. It had rained overnight. After lunch we took an excursion to the shops to get a product for anchor chain protection..by the time we got back it was after 1500. Given this job is going to be conducted in 40 cm tranches it is going to be a long job... I got a couple of sections done before dark.



The rest of the day: more clean up, recreational reading, watching television, administration for Europe

I haven't been taking much notice of the birds: the only birds of note that stuck in my mind today - silver gulls, little black cormorant, little pied cormorant,

Other boat jobs included more tidy up - it is amazing how messy the boat gets when you are doing 'works.'

14th March 2024. More chain! At this rate it will be *quotidian*, at least until I give up and/or find a quicker method. After the wind-borne dirt over the hot weekend the boat needed a wash. I managed the port and starboard flat decks, windows and upper gunwales. The day started out with mild winds but by lunchtime it was blowing 16 to 20 knots (the school kid training we had been in the middle of for the past few days was changed from a second session of sailing after lunch to using a line of upturned boats as a runway and a time-trial run and jump).

It was getting to crunch-time for some rubbish disposal. Since the closure of the soft plastic collection by the major supermarkets I have been storing the clean soft plastic we buy (I do try to minimise it). The predicted reinvigoration of the collection process by December 2023, according to the Woolworths website, hadn't happened but on a whim I decided to check their website again. Whilst we had been on our road trip, Woolworths, Coles and Aldi had started a trial collecting soft plastics again - but only in 12 locations across Melbourne. None of the locations is near Werribee. But one of the locations was Box Hill Woolworths...Perhaps I can get rid of our stockpile tomorrow.



This looks like mould - it is actually the re coagulating of the coconut oil!

15th March 2024. I don't know if you would call today successful - a good chunk of the middle of the day was spent on the road. We had a property inspection booked today - to meet the new property manager, and re-acquaint ourselves with her boss (a relationship we have had for more years than I can count). The inspection went well but has presented us with unwanted maintenance; some basic and cheap which we will hopefully get done next week, and some expensive maintenance that needs to be done professionally.

We started the *hegira* at 1430, managing to avoid the traffic heading past Greensborough Railway Station, but got caught up with the woefully inadequate synchronisation of the lights on the Greensborough Bypass. Because it took us 35 minutes to get on the M80 - instead of about 15 - we ended up in stop-start traffic whilst getting off the M80 onto the Princes Highway - a trip that should have taken just over an hour to get home took us one hour and 40 minutes!

But that wasn't the worst frustration of the day!

Since late 2022 when the major supermarkets stopped taking soft plastic, I have been storing it. Granted we don't use much - in fact I actively make choices not to use soft plastic even if the cost of goods is greater - however in some out-of-the-way places this is not possible. Checking websites last year there was hope that soft plastic recycling was going to be up and running again by December 2023. This didn't happen and I was resigned to chucking out bags of plastic into normal rubbish bins - an action I was loathe to do. On a whim yesterday I checked the internet again. From early February 2024 twelve trial sites across Melbourne had been set up to collect soft plastic again - the sites were in

Woolworths, Coles and Aldi. None of the sites were local to Werribee but one was at Box Hill. We were heading to Montmorency - Box Hill we assumed, a straightforward run from there that we knew. It should have been a quick job when we got there - boy were we wrong.

I suppose the first indication that things had really changed in the past ten years was the towering building in the distance as we travelled down Station Street. Andrew did mention there had been discussion of putting a high rise on Box Hill Central - and I believe there was some opposition to it at the time. The building was very tall - and very obvious - and very Chinese - given the name of the structure. I thought that enough to give me a shock until I looked west through a gap in the landscape as we were driving down the hill from Doncaster. The one towering building was nothing compared to the mini island city appearing just to the west - a cluster of high rises that looked so out of place to what I was used to. Then again, when we left land, Box Hill was all shopping centres and office buildings. forty years ago Box Hill was neat uniform wooden bungalows. Now it is a satellite high-rise city smack in the middle of the suburbs....

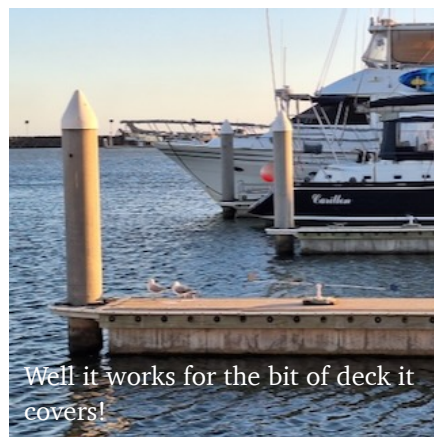
But it wasn't the confronting metro-visual that proved our frustration - it was the metro population! Turning right into Whitehorse Road was inefficient (and yes, we should have turned earlier), and then left into Elgar, a slow trail behind other cars. A detour sign on Elgar Road sent all traffic down the road we wanted to take, and we merged onto the roundabout at the corner of Box Hill Central along with other cars coming perpendicular to us - and at a snail's pace. 'A classic case of infrastructure not being able to cope with development numbers. The downstairs car park was closed and we were creeping along not knowing what to do. In the end I jumped out of the car, grabbing both trolleys full of



bags and made my way to Woolies - filling most of one collecting box with my stash. Andrew managed to find a car park on the top carpark and we got rid of the rest of the bags. We only had time to buy a couple of apples before we headed out of there.....Andrew never wants to see Box Hill again - too many people - and I don't blame him.

By the time we got to Montmorency we had 20 minutes until we had our appointment and an apple each really wasn't going to be adequate. We parked in Were Street, Montmorency to grab what we could - each heading in a different direction to find an appropriate takeaway meal.

When we finally got home the evening was spent finding a cheaper London hotel, watching the Italian news, and responding to emails.



Well it works for the bit of deck it covers!



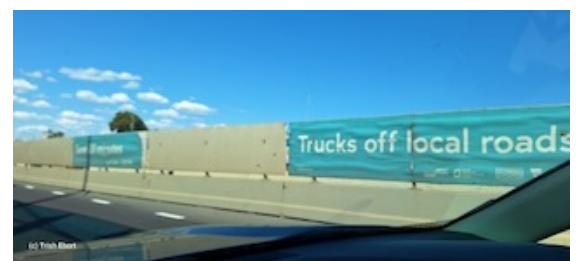
## Renovation and Recreation

16th March 2024. Our original plans for this morning were cancelled, and on a whim I suggested to Andrew that perhaps we could spend a couple of hours being efficient and start the easy tidy-up of the rental property. The idea was simple - get across to the job - go over what we needed - get to a hardware store (in this case the ubiquitous Bunnings) and leave with plenty of time to spare to get back to boat, have a shower and get ready to head to Williamstown to catch up with friends for dinner. In theory that should be simple.

But it wasn't. Or at least some of it wasn't. There is an inordinate amount of roadworks on Melbourne's roads at the moment - the West Gate Bridge has had lane closures since late December! Usually this isn't an issue as when we get to the end of the M80 we turn west - toward Geelong. Except today we couldn't - that entire section of road was blocked off and we were forced to merge with the packing vehicles heading toward the city! We had missed the last exit from the M80 and so the options to get off before the Yarra River were to turn onto the old section of Princes Highway heading toward town (we were in the wrong lane for this), turn onto Millers Road (we were also in the wrong lane for this), or to turn into

Williamstown Road. This we managed to do - although just getting off the freeway and onto Williamstown Road took an inordinate amount of time. Andrew was exhausted. We were both frustrated. And the last thing we wanted to do was head back from Williamstown to Werribee to get changed to head back to Williamstown! The dinner location was changed to Werribee and we navigated the back roads to get back to boat.

After a catch up with friends we go back to boat in time to put footy on but that was mainly background noise - I was concentrating on diary notes.





## The tiniest road-trip yet!

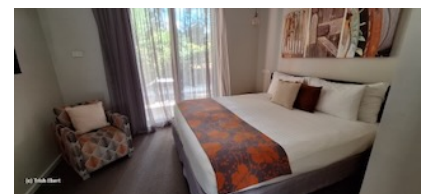
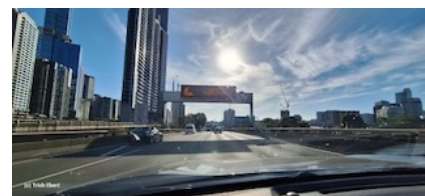
### Werribee to Yarragon to Warragul

17th March 2024. I had had a mocktail last night at the pub. Boy did I suffer for the sugar overnight, waking after a nightmare and with itchy skin. It was only around 0330 but I got up and edited some newsletter anyway. Well, actually I got up in response to a squeaky rope. By 0445 I was tired enough to head back to bed.

Not again! We were trying to avoid tolls. But we didn't. After copping the exit to M1 being blocked yesterday, we found this morning that the exit to Kings Way was blocked, and the only other exit to get off the tollway was blocked two-by-two for quite a long way. Given the speed the traffic was travelling, our expected two-hour-trip could have taken a lot longer, and whilst we had allowed close to three hours to get to our lunch destination, Andrew's preference for not sitting in traffic won out. So we took the Domain Tunnel - possibly only the second time I have ever taken this route! We got to Yarragon somewhat early but we hadn't actually had breakfast, so a cuppa and some substance was had in one of the obviously popular cafes (full of people) before we went a-visiting.

Lunch was with three friends whom we hadn't seen since last time Sengo was in Port Phillip Bay - - about six years

Mid afternoon we headed back toward Warragul, to our hotel for the night; the Comfort Inn is an older hotel 'with lipstick on' as Andrew put it. The room was reasonably small - but it did have a Queen Sized Bed. Whilst there was an instruction in the compendium that 'cooking in rooms wasn't allowed unless you were in a 'suite,' we found we had a microwave and a toaster provided so I guess that form of 'cooking' was ok. We took the easy and cheap way out, and after catching up with M & R and their kids (we caught up with M & R early Feb but it was great to finally see the kids again (they have grown up)) we popped into Woolworths and got ourselves some bread, sliced meat and cheese for dinner.



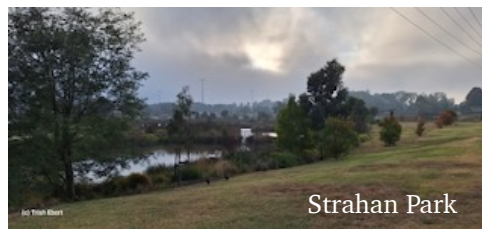
Warragul to boat (via Warburton).

18th March 2024. The hotel bed was reasonably hard but doable. Except the pillows weren't. There were two of them but they were still too soft for a comfortable night's sleep. And we had forgotten to bring our own!

Our pre-breakfast exercise was a very casual stroll around Strahan Park, which I assume is the drainage ponds for the new housing estate.

Birds spotted: coot, swamphen, new holland honeyeater, wren, wood duck,

After breakfast - which happened to include the same ingredients as last night - with a bit of nut butter thrown in, we headed off to Warburton, the windy road via Neerim and Powelltown bring back memories of visiting Warragul Field Days, and hiking through Latrobe State Forest. Lunch was with relatives near Warburton and then we made the long trip back to boat. I had initially thought we might get a bit more work done at the rental unit but time was getting on. We just missed peak hour traffic and got back to boat around 1630.



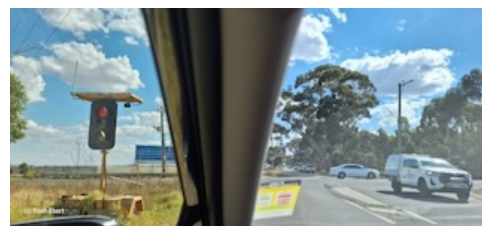
Strahan Park



Strahan Park

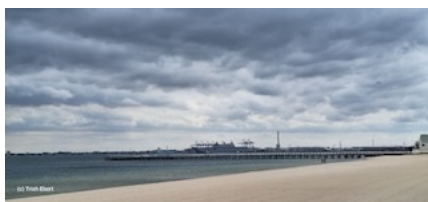


Strahan Park



## Lunch at Middle Park

19th March 2024. We didn't have much originally planned for today -just lunch with an ex boatie on the other side of the Bay, just south of the Station Street Pier. At the last minute we decided we would visit Whitworths in the city beforehand, so a roadwork-avoiding trip over a roadwork-affected Westgate Bridge, turned into a roadwork-avoiding trip to the City via Footscray instead; and then the negotiation of Melbourne CBD streets, including the long forgotten right-hand hook-turns from the left hand side of the road! All sections of the trip were surprisingly short and efficient.



## Renovation Rumble

20th March 2024 and 21st March 2024

The 20th and 21st March involved the tidying up/renovation of one of our rental units. This place is small and will never be *comely*! We chose to do some simpler jobs - patch a few holes, paint a few wall patches, wash some of the floor, replace some curtains. Harder and larger jobs will be left to the experts. On the 20th we left boat around 0700. It was too late and we had a slower than expected trip across to the site, detouring via breakfast in a cafe in Were Street, Montmorency. This meant that our start time, after a trip to Bunnings was almost late morning. So on the 21st, we got up earlier, left earlier, had a smoother pre-peak-hour drive (just) to site, and got down to work much earlier. By the time we left we were, *by and large*, sick of the place!





## Getting closer to leaving

22nd March 2024. I didn't sleep well. The stress of yesterday seeped into my brain (we had been informed our post office box is no longer available) and whilst I got one solid chunk of a couple of hour's sleep, I was up around 0300 trying to calm myself down again to get some sleep before the alarm was due to go off at 0630. Unfortunately I had just fallen into a deep sleep when the alarm went off. Andrew pulled himself out of bed earlier than I did. The morning was chilly and I am sure he would have preferred to stay in bed. but the kayak and its associated accessories were still in the back of the hire vehicle. And the car was being returned to the car hire mob today.

As Andrew was scheduling to be ensconced in the Grand Prix (indeed that was why we had extended our time on the dock until Monday), returning the car was left to me. But it wasn't my first job. Because I hadn't organised these tasks earlier I had some *rash* moves to make this morning. The first job was a trip to the tip, to drop off some e-waste. then there was a trip to the chemist to drop off some old prescriptions. Then there was a trip to Samsung - to get the internet browser checked for viruses (so I could get access to my banking app back (long story involving a scam that I very nearly got caught up in)), and then the op shop, and then the fuel station, before finally relinquishing the vehicle that has been our constant companion for the past month.

I had arranged for a friend to pick me up from the car hire mob and after a cuppa we headed off for a casual walk in the Cobble Dick Ford Conservation Area. The ford itself was blocked so we accessed the reserve via the car park side and took a stroll along the track along the river. There was only one other visitor to the park when we got there. There were two further cars in the car park by the time we left.

Bird list: wrens, silvereyes, white browed scrubwren, craven, sulphur crested cockatoo, wedge-tailed eagle, and a couple of birds of prey seen from a distance but not identified.

Whilst I was away Andrew managed to, in between his Grand Prix fix, put some stuff away, including the kayak, and check the oil in the genset,

Afternoon activities involved getting a new post box number, and watching the AFL on television.



One of many old and unreadable interps boards seen in the past couple of months



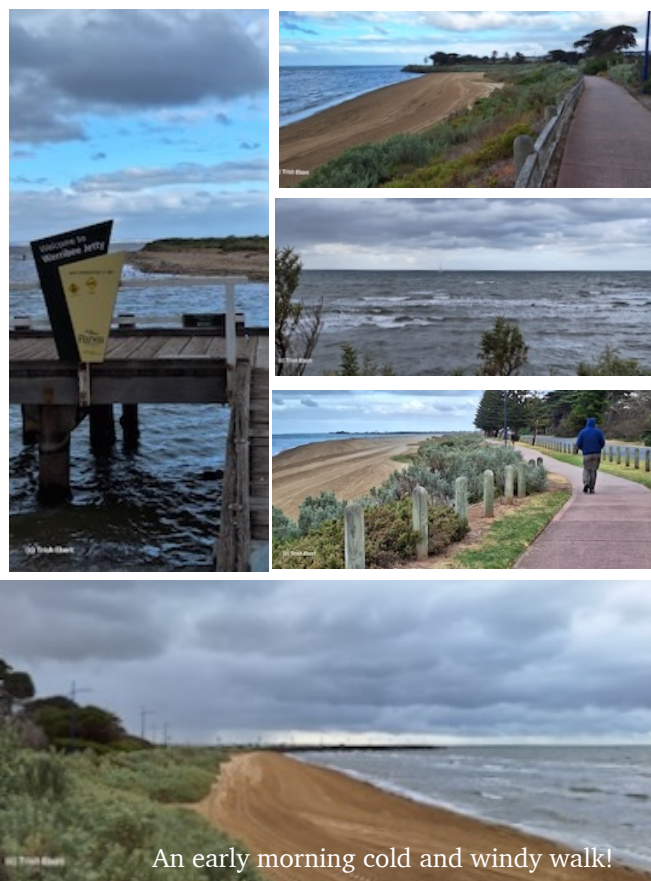
## The necessary last minute boat jobs...

23rd March 2024. In this marina we are not allowed to clean the hull - which is perfectly understandable - they don't want you to contribute pollution to the water here, but you wouldn't want to *deglute* what is here either - but we are, with permission, allowed to clean the areas that make the boat usable. So with a lot of grunting Andrew wedged himself into a restrictive wetsuit and went overboard to clear the legs, water intakes and any other necessary bits of growth that had built up over the past three months. We had been shocked (surprised) at the coral reef that was growing on Sengo's hulls when we got back from our road trip - some of the plant life was a healthy foot or so long. It was just as well he braved the cold water - the water intake for the engine was completely blocked. Getting him out of the wetsuit however was an exercise in patience...

I washed the top deck and outside of the helm pod - which as usual took me a couple of hours. Other jobs were just general clean-up. Breakfast was cereal and yoghurt, lunch small pancakes, dinner was fish and salad.

We had a bit of 'a sci fi movie binge' tonight - which meant that we didn't go to bed until well after midnight. The first movie we had seen (although Andrew can't recall but I can tell you where we saw it, where we were parked and who I was working for at the time (I remember talking to someone at my temp job about it - funny how the mind works)). The second movie, showing on the same tv channel directly after the first, neither of us had seen.

The training boat next to us went out twice during the night. It is the same training company that I got my 'competent crew' through and Andrew received his 'day skipper.' Some time during the night, unbeknownst to us at the time, they tied up their tender in our pen. There were two things wrong with this. Firstly - it is our pen; we are leasing it and we hadn't



agreed to subletting! A simple request would have been fine but there was no communication (and because we were up there were lights on the boat so they could have just knocked). More pertinently however the tender was only tied up with a rope from the bow!!! I am not sure if the tide change or the wind affected the vessel, or it may even be as simple as an animal movement affecting water movements - there are fish, water birds and the odd seal in here, but the tender swung around. There was not enough room for the tender to swing without hitting our boat. I was not amused. I had a grumpy conversation with Andrew on the deck as we tied up the back of their boat with the extension of our dock line. No one from the training boat came out to help - or apologise - with an instructor on board they should know better - what sort of respect is he conveying?

24th March 2024. After last night's events I was hoping for a *panglossian* attitude this morning. I was trying not to revert to type - the thoughts of 'Oh boy I hate getting off dock. Almost as much as I hate getting onto dock,' actively pushed out of my head.

More little steps toward leaving. Before the Grand Prix telecast Andrew got into the water again to clean the necessary bits off the starboard hull. Like yesterday, the engine's water intake was completely blocked - and the big metal screwdriver again came in handy! Like yesterday he spent over half an hour in the water and came up shivering. But unlike yesterday this time he only had his stinger suit on - much easier to get on and off, but a little thinner and less protection from the cold.

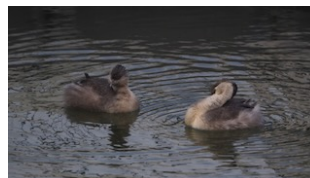
I put the side window covers back on (until it got to zipping them up - the zip got stuck), and washed the base deck of the boat (another 1.5 to 2 hour exercise). I also managed three loads of washing (non 'tumble-dry' so put some of them out to dry at dusk), and put remaining top hatch covers on. Grumpy about last night I sent an email to the owner of the yacht/sailing training business - It is actually unprofessional to tell someone off when there is an audience - but perhaps I should have - and educated the trainees in respect for fellow boaties. Perhaps we have been north for too long - where all demographics of boat owners (even those of opposite political and societal views), tend to ask permission if their vessels are going to impact yours.

The last main job of the day was putting the side pontoons back on the tinnie.

At the end of the day we started to put the work gear away (hoses etc)...just as a member of the public wanted to have a chat — not the best timing. We entertained him as politely as we could.....

Breakfast had been cereal and yoghurt, lunch was pear loaf. Dinner was creamy chicken and mushrooms.

The wind came up a bit after dusk but had settled by 2200. The evening tv movie entertainment (for me) was Oceans 12.







## Back to the wild blue yonder...

### Wyndham Harbour to Indented Head

25th March 2024. We were off the fuel dock at 0930. Later than we expected...The dock master who was on shift yesterday had a day off today, and so the alternate was on shift. Both dm's are lovely people, and both capable (unlike unfortunately the office staff (lovely people - just haven't been trained with grabbing lines yet and that can, and has, lead to unfortunate situations). The alternate dm wasn't working yesterday, didn't know we were leaving and was, unfortunately, a 'little late' for work. Having waited around for some help the request of send '\*\* down as soon as he gets here' was taken literally. Of course, this is my fault. But I was being cautious - having had not so competent helpers sent out before. When at 0850 I went to the office to hand in the fobs and to see what 'a few minutes' meant: the dm was certainly later than 'a few minutes' at this stage, I found several staff who were capable, who could have been sent out to help us instead. I was a little grizzly at this as the wind had started to pick up and getting off dock now a bit more stressful for me. But, it was my fault. So, we pinched the manager to throw our lines to us, and then we motored off to the fuel dock.

Of course, I wasn't exactly happy about this but with half tanks it was necessary -we had jerry cans under the back cockpit table but we were not allowed to decant them into the

tanks whilst we were in the marina -and there wasn't enough of them to fill the tanks anyway.

Getting onto the fuel dock went smoothly - the only issue; the low-flow fuel hose is slightly shorter than the high-flow hose. Of course the low-flow hose didn't quite make it to the outer tank so we had to manage the high flow gently. What a relief it was to leave the second dock behind and finally motor out the marina entrance! Like an *arboreal* monkey at home in the trees, we were now at home again on the water....



Engines were off and the genoa was out at 1020. We had a side on swell and most things inside the cabin were secure. A slap of larger waves, formed with higher than expected wind speeds, sprayed salted water over the front deck - just when I had it clean for other reasons. An unexpected crab pot(?) was avoided and we suddenly realised we may wish to avoid the ship that seemed to be on course for a collision. We are not used to this anymore - we have had three month's of worrying about other hazards - it is time to get the head back into sailing. I am not sure if the ship altered course slightly (I didn't check the AIS) but we sailed in front and it went behind - on its way to Corio Bay, Geelong.



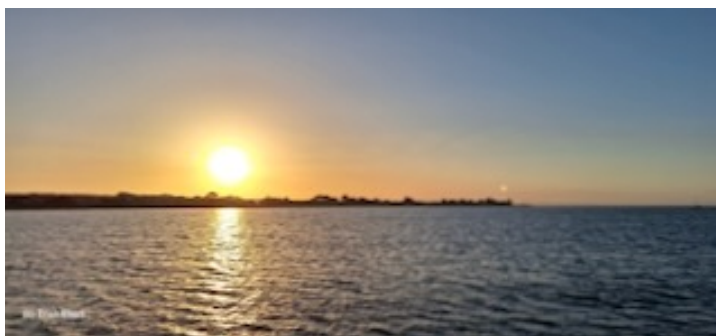
We pulled the genoa in and turned the engines back on around 1125; having traveled around several marks (including isolated danger marks) we needed now to motor into the wind to get to our anchorage.

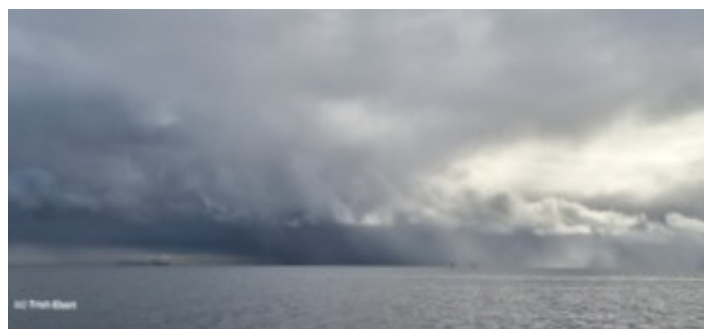
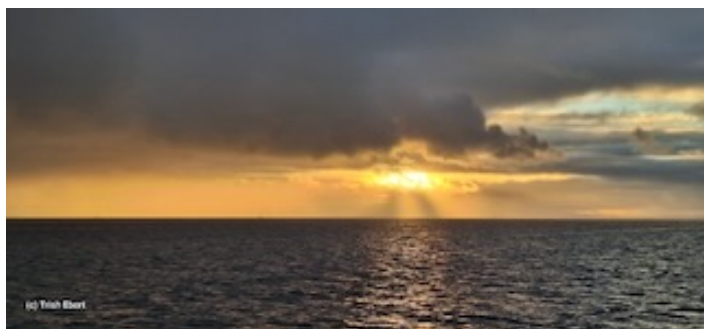
The anchor was down and the anchor ball raised around 1150 off Indented Head. A monohull sailing yacht was anchored (?or moored) to the west of us; a powerboat was on a mooring to the east of us. There were other moorings in the area.

Pied cormorants (?) roosted on a couple of exposed rocks at the lower end of the tide, silver gulls flew past and, toward sundown, a flock of Australasian gannets flew past. We didn't notice any other birds - we were too busy with tidy up jobs; dust the inside of the helm station, put the remainder of last night's washing out to dry, wipe down the fenders, clean the hull (port) and sum log (the water here was lovely and clear -I could see the bottom. - depth around 2m).

Breakfast was cereal and yoghurt, lunch was pancakes, dinner was a vegie pasta mix with left over pumpkin soup used as a base.

Wind during the day was blowing up to mid twenties - the gusts higher - as [windy.com](https://www.windy.com) predicted they would be.





## Indented Head to Rye

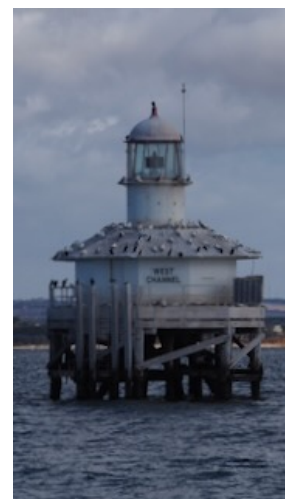
26th March 2024. Nav light off. Tick (what a *newfangled* sensation - we haven't done that for three months). Back door up. Tick. Back sides up. Well, perhaps only one. The sun was trying to shine between a gap in the stratus cloud and it looked like it was raining to the east. As I started to roll the port back cover up I felt the slightest of mists. Yup. It is raining - I will leave that side down for now.

I had slept reasonably well, although it was either the blanket at my feet keeping me too warm, or some unknown food stuff, that gave me dreams and itchy skin. None the less, there was more sleep overnight than not and I woke up around 0730. I hope my body can get back to waking with the light (as we are designed to do)- although the technically time of that is going to change next week when 'daylight savings' ends.

The morning jobs included getting some new spinnaker brace lines organised (or starting them), neatening diary notes, and having a major panic when we couldn't get into our bank account - and calling the bank to change our details. This bank is a privacy

nightmare - because there are two of us we both get different log-ins and passwords, and heaven help you if you are in the room whilst the other one of us is trying to update their passwords - the staff refuse to give you one (because the other person my use it). But I digress. This change happened because of a breakdown of our postal service - our letters are apparently being returned to sender, and as we have had that post office box number for twenty years it is going to be a challenge to remember just who has that address. None the less today it was one bank down; and lots more official stuff to go.

There was little wind when we got up. By the time we picked up the anchor there wasn't much more. At one point we were able to put the genoa out and turn off one engine. That lasted around an hour. Then the wind picked up and the genoa was rolled in. For a while we kept only one engine on until I realised we were now travelling against the tide and only travelling at around 3 knots. We wanted to be settled down on the northern side of Port Phillip Bay's southern peninsular before the strong south westerly winds came in. Toward the end of our trip some of these winds did show themselves (12 to 15 knots True) but we were now travelling south west and they were on the nose, so definitely not useful.



We made our way to a large area free of moorings to do a test 'raise of the sail.' Andrew noted a couple of the runners were a little stiff, but apart from that all went well. The sail was dropped in the same run and

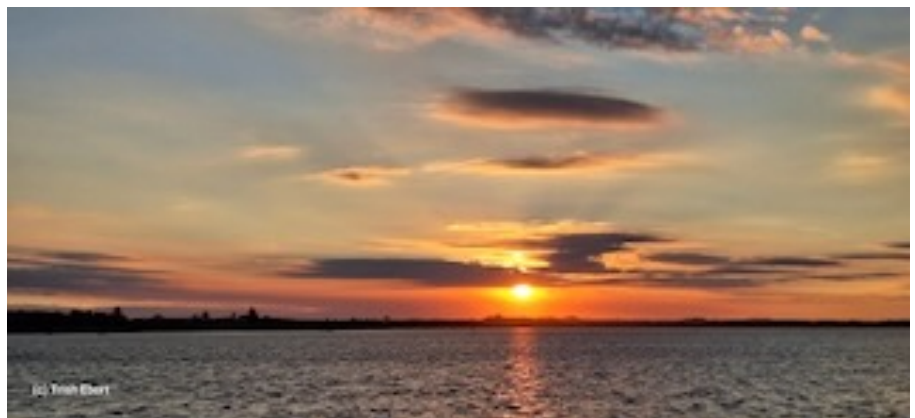
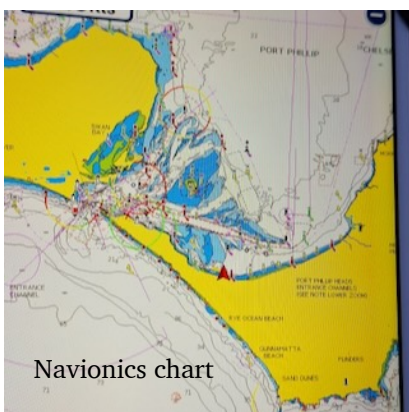


we turned the boat away 200 meters before we hit the wall of the Blairgowrie marina.

I wasn't too keen on getting mixed up in a bunch of moorings so we headed toward Rye, putting the anchor down, in around 6 meters, to the north east of the bathing boxes.

Lunch was small pancakes on the journey. Jobs for the afternoon included putting the old tinnie pontoon into storage, rearranging back cockpit storage, wiping both the outside and inside of the clears. Whilst on the top of the boat I noticed the amount of dirt on the solar panels - but I only washed them a couple of days ago!

We did watch some Italian News but there was no movie on so the evening was spent on odd jobs and recreational reading.



## Rye

27th March 2024. I woke up early - *fretting* with a whole lot of 'first world' worries going through my mind. However, I did wonder if we had been cut off from one bank because our mail had been returned, did we still have access to our main accounts. So I got up, before 0300, and tried to update



those details. And couldn't! The correction was going to take a phone call - and that couldn't happen until after 0800. I went back to bed and had a delightful solid five hours sleep.

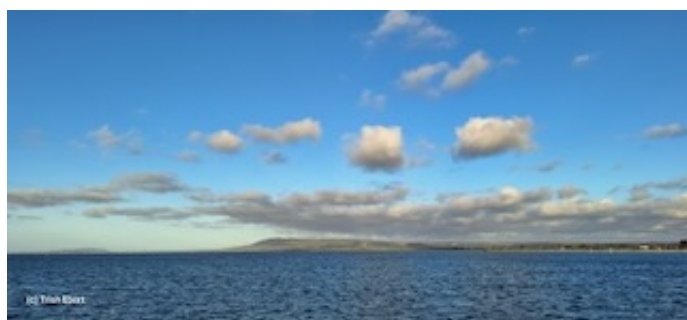
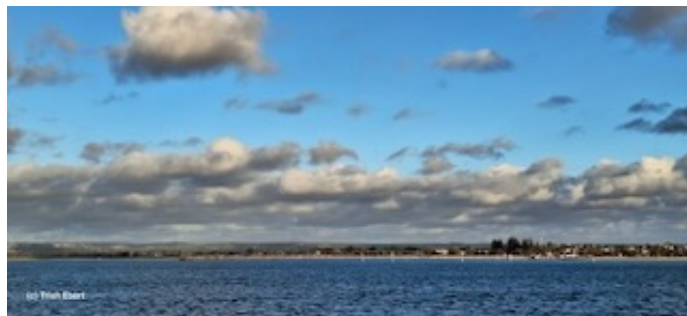
Andrew was already up when I pulled myself out of bed at 0830 this morning. The sun was out, the winds were calm and we were rocking gently on the water. The first thing I did was ring the bank. Now all sorted I could relax. Perhaps I would spend part of today on mail box management - the other part of the day would need to be on last minute - trip ready - boat jobs.....

Except it wasn't as easy as that. Once I'd updated one bank account I thought I better chase the credit card block. And then shares, and then super, and then health insurance!

Breakfast was at 1100. It rained for a couple of minutes around 1130

In the end we didn't get too many boat jobs done but we did manage to sort the recalcitrant zips on the side window covers and get them working. Instead we spent most of the day updating postal address details on all of our important and government contacts.

We changed the gas bottle over this evening - it has been a very long time since we have had to do that!





## Westernport Bay

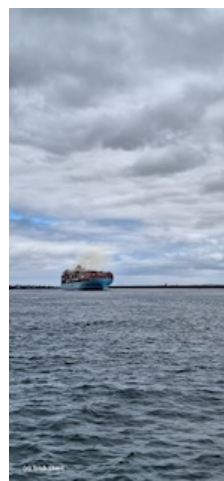
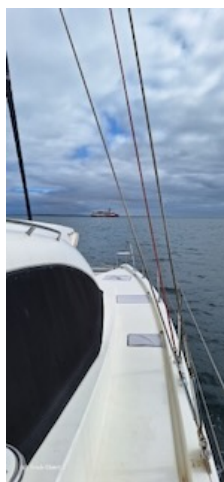
28th March 2024. We picked the anchor up at 1015. Slack tide at Port Phillip Heads was at 1234. Based on our calculations of 5 knots we actually picked the anchor up late in order to get to the Heads and ensure minimal tidal movement heading into Bass Strait. However, with engines on and the outgoing tide we got to the entrance in good time, following *Tasmania I* out and avoiding another big ship on the way in. Once we had cleared the neck we turned the engines off - we were tight to the wind. It was 1224.

A mono had exited the Heads at the same time - they however perhaps had their engine off earlier as they initially took a more westerly bite.

We had a reef in the main because we were expecting stronger winds than we actually got. It was blowing 5 to 10 knots in Port Phillip. It was blowing 15 knots True outside - this equated to 18 knots apparent wind speed.

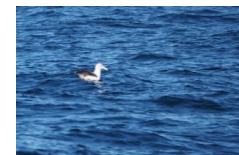
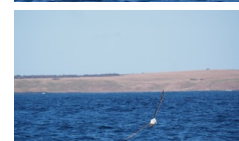
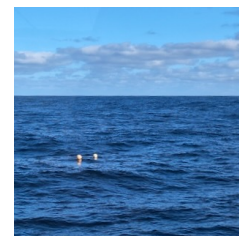
The sky was stratus grey.

We put an engine back on at 1500, and motor sailed all the way to our anchorage. I think such a long break from on the sea



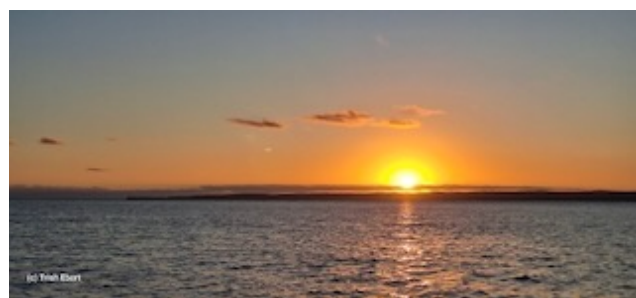
didn't help my constitution, and very old 'Travelcalm,' and some preserved ginger became my salvation; first I felt hot, then I felt cold, and then I felt woozy!

The second engine went on at 1810, but because we were against the tide we were only gaining 3 to 4 knots. We had negotiated the crab pots outside the western entrance to Western Port Bay and now all we had to do was work out where to anchor. Our thinking revolved around the fact it would be too busy at Cowes so we wanted an alternative. The mono that had come out of Port Phillip headed for Cat Bay - there were already two yachts in that area. We headed along the coast a bit - anchoring off the beach from the hamlet of Ventrnor.



It had been touch and go for a little while. Given that it was getting late in the day we didn't know whether we should turn back to Cat Bay, continue to Tankerton (which given the distance would guarantee us anchoring in the dark), or chose somewhere in between - which is why we settled on Ventrnor. The anchor was down in good holding around 1700. Thankfully, before sunset!

Albatrosses were spotted during the trip. We were welcomed into the anchorage by a yappy dog being walked on the beach.





## Vetnor to Cowes

29th March 2024. I woke up to a pink tinge coming through the unblinded window. On closer inspection, I saw the sun was just over the horizon and light seemed to be piercing through cloud. When I went outside to take a photo of this I could smell smoke. The boat was rocking a bit and it looked like the wind was now north-west...a lee shore for us but plenty of room. Andrew was still asleep so I didn't wake him. I checked the wind forecast instead.

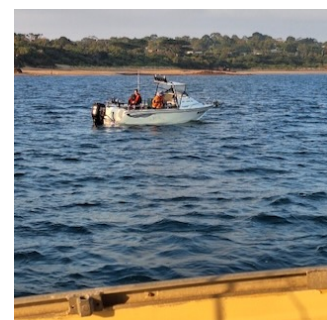


Water droplets were on outside of starboard windows. Had it rained last night? Condensation. Or perhaps the salty spray from yesterday's side on swell. The water droplets on top of the sunroof however were not seawater..the swell wasn't that big! Yup. According to observations, admittedly on the other side of the island, the north easterly had come in early

A fishing boat drifted by - a little too close. Had a boat decided we might be a fad....really...you have the whole bay! some people just have no respect (but we knew that as per our last episode at Wyndham Harbour).



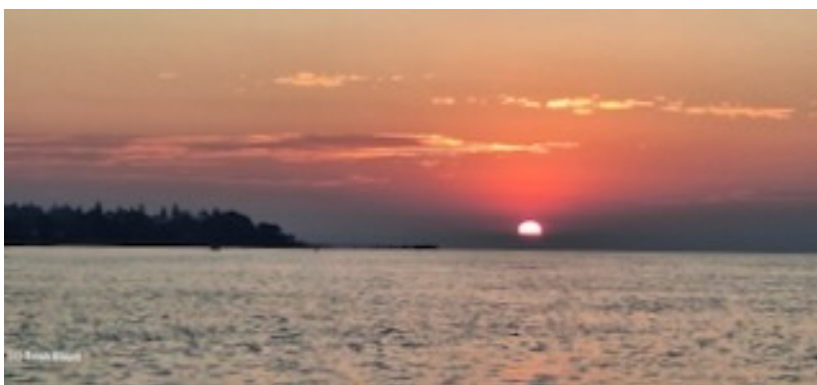
Andrew got up around 0845 and before we left the anchorage we made some water - who knows what the quality of water would be around the corner.

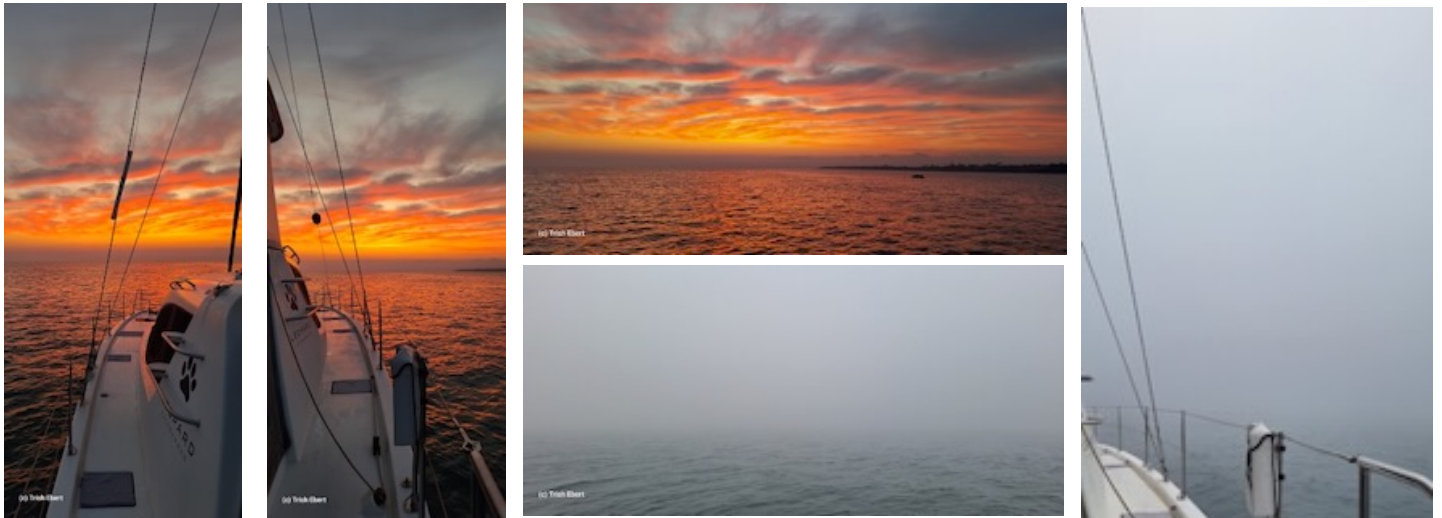


The anchor was up at 1400. It was down again (after a mishap with the bridle) at 1500 - north east of Cowes, off the Silverleaf Beach. It was hot and still outside. Looking toward shore I noted four swans - then there were 11, like a *peloton* riding in line behind the leader. What a great sight.

We deemed it a bit late to go to shore to explore so we got on with boat jobs.

By the time we noted the pink, smoke-affected, sunset we had amongst other things; rinsed 2 ropes, and cleaned bird poop off the sail bag. I noted the stars briefly where the sky was clear - but it was too cold to stay outside and admire them.





Cowes

30th March 2024. At 0715 in the coloured dawn, a silver gull was fishing from above the surface of the water. Something bigger was fishing from below, given that bait fish were breaching the water's surface. The wind was light. The current was strong

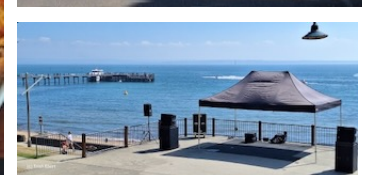
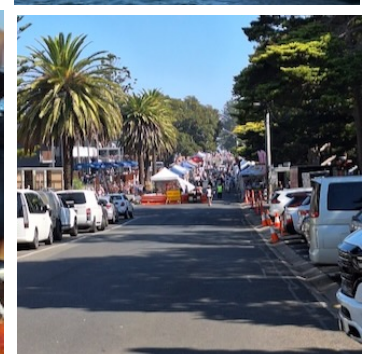
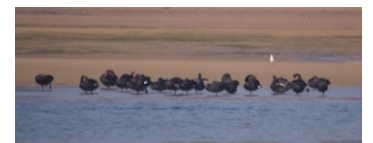
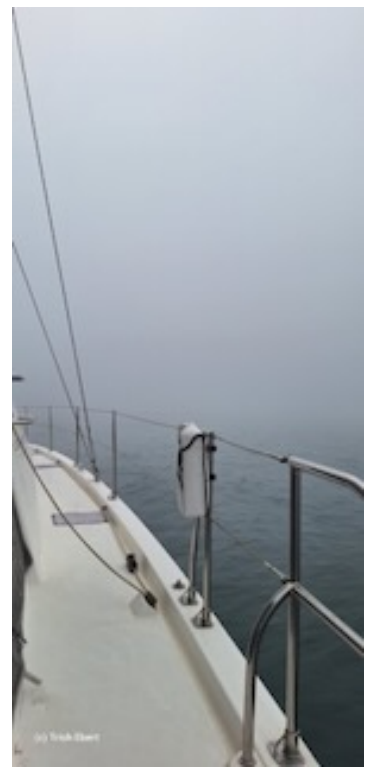
The weather came in and then eventually lifted. When we got visibility back, I saw 47 Swans. Low tide was at 1045

At 1145 we thought about getting ready to go to shore, and would have departed Sengo had we not discovered the tyres for the Tinnie were flat. So by the time we retrieved a bike pump, manoeuvred some pliers to undo the camps, pumped the tyres up and put the wheels with blown-up tyres back on the tiinnie, it was 1230 when we actually let go of the big boat.

It was 1300 when we left the tinnie on the beach...having rolled it up slope hoping we would be back before we had to swim to retrieve it.

The market just setting up but not all stalls were in place. As the event didn't officially start until 1400 we didn't hang around, but given the time we were looking for somewhere for lunch.

We found an Italian restaurant, and I was delighted to find the gluten free pizza bases were the same size as the normal ones - I suspect these are homemade - and they are big.....







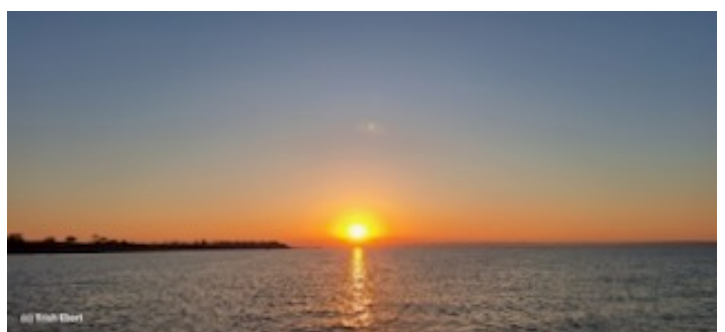
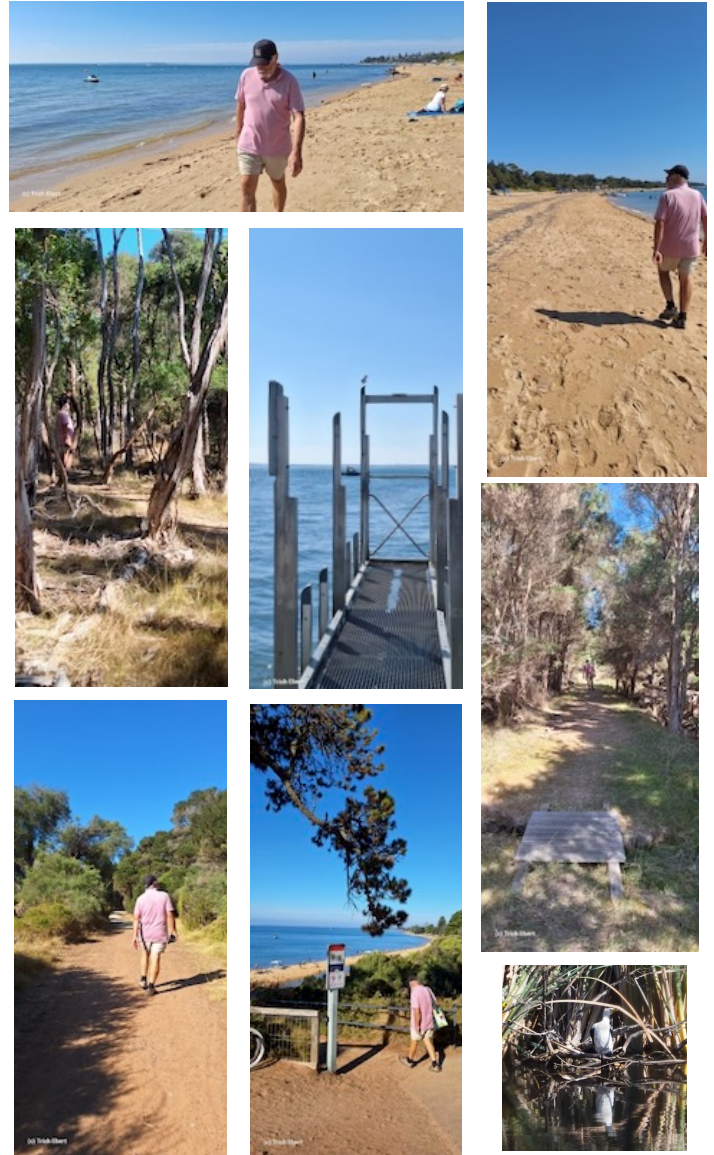
After lunch we went for a walk - west along the beach, before finding our way to a 'conservation reserve.' This little patch of bush wasn't as I was hoping, the only obvious track was around the edge of the reserve, along house fences. The pond wasn't obvious behind scrub and I nearly missed it. The only bird life on the pond was four little pied cormorants.

On the way back to boat we didn't take the scenic route. Because we had some food shopping to do, we headed back down Church Street toward town. Both Coles and Woolies are here, and an independent. After stocking up we made our way back through the now busy market with its *hive-mind* of Easter Weekend tourists enjoying the event, and back onto the beach. The water level was such that the only reason the tinnie wasn't floating was because of the wheels. A tourist who was already completely wet offered to help us out, and pushed us into deeper water.

We were back on boat at 1700.

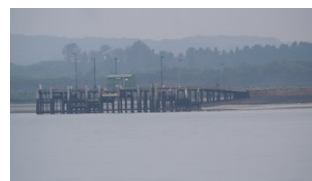
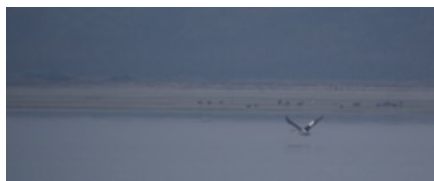
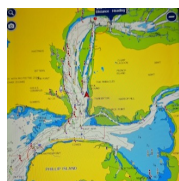
Animals spotted; pet dogs and one large ray near the shore line at the boat ramp

Birds: black swans, pacific gulls, pied cormorants, heard paratoids (probably rainbow lorikeets), galahs, wattle birds (not sure which species), magpies, mudlarks, pied oyster catchers, lapwings, silver gulls, new holland honeyeater, blackbird



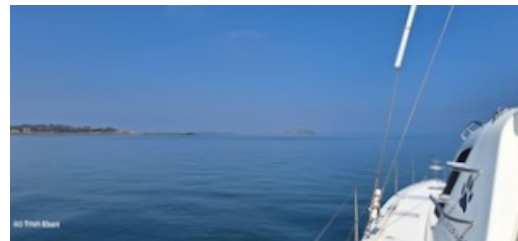


## Cowes to Chicory Lane via Tankerton and French Island



31st March 2024. A quiet grey morning. I didn't wake up until 0730. At 0850 the swans were back on shore adjacent.

We started lifting the anchor at 1005. It took me until 1015 to get it fully up because I had to manage the weed coming up with it. The bow wave of the **Casey Lee** tourist boat didn't help. The water was glass. The sky was grey and nondescript.

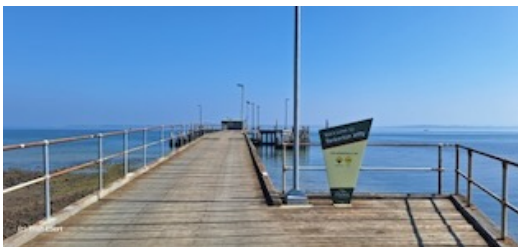


The anchor was down north of Tankerton Jetty at 1110. It must be a good spot for fishing around here - as half a dozen boats were drifting south of us, between us and the jetty. The sky was still grey. It was still quiet. There was still no wind, although given the planned excursion today, I am not complaining about that!



Birds spotted on this journey little pied cormorant, black swans, pelican, duck of unknown species, silver gulls.

We left boat at 1330. We had waited for two reasons: the first to make sure the anchor was happy at change of tide, and the second to allow some tide to come in so we could hopefully reach sand when we got to shore and out of the tinnie (we are anchored along a mangrove lined shore - it is likely to be mainly mud).

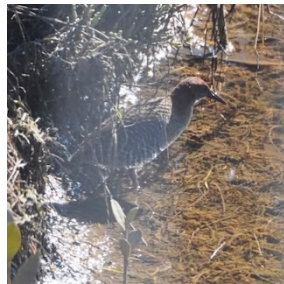


In the end the second reason was superfluous (although the delay meant that the grey sky had turned to a magnificent blue), because Andrew decided to tie up to the inside of the fixed jetty. We got off on the bottom landing and Andrew was going to tie the tinnie off to this level. However, I checked the height of the expected incoming tide and convinced him that tying the tender up to the next level up the stairs might be more prudent. We didn't quite know how long we were going to be.

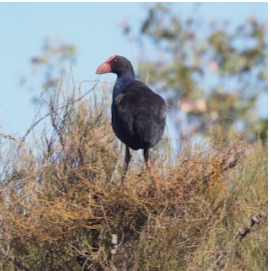
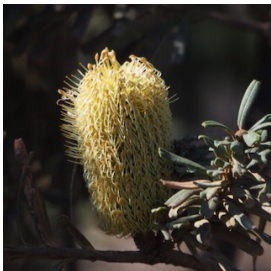
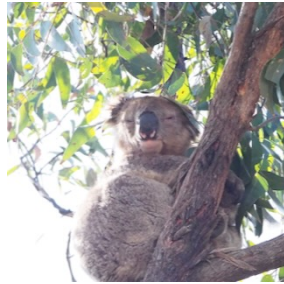


Where the cars are parked at the land-end of Tankerton Road, just before you drive onto the jetty, there is a road sign. And it suggests that the General Store is 3 kilometres from here. Had it been 5 km we would not





have had time to get there and back before a preferred departure from Jetty at 1530. 3km gave us a 40min walk, a 20 min break, and a 40 minute walk back again. We could have perhaps hailed the general store courtesy bus as it drove past but we hadn't technically booked it (and the website does say it needs booking). Had we got a lift we would have missed seeing birds of course, and amongst several species this included several Cape Barren Geese. And of course, some exercise - which apart from seeing some of the island, was the main point of the trip.



The General Store is small, but the grounds were full of people, and from what I could gather, some were locals and some visitors from the ferry. We bought an ice-cream and a local guidebook, and had a five minute look for koalas along the road on the eastern side of the business, before we headed back to boat. The 1535 ferry left before we got to the jetty..we had been distracted with koalas and a Lewins Rail. But it was probably just as well we had some time at the jetty without any interference. Or witnesses!

The tide had indeed come in high enough for the tinnie to be floating at the level of the second platform. This meant the first platform was underwater and meant we were going to get wet. Andrew is taller than me and two steps down meant the water level went up to his knees...for me it went up higher. Technically all we had to do was walk the tinnie around to the end of the staircase, even if it was way above the bottom landing. Except that we couldn't. Had we not had the pontoons we may have just been able to fit the with of the vessel between the bottom of the handrail and the outer pole, but...the pontoons meant that only the tinnie's pointy nose stuck anywhere near the end of the hand rail. Getting into it from the



bow was an exercise in flexibility...and we are very glad the pontoons were there for balance.

We left Tankerton Jetty around 1550. We were back on boat at 1600. After checking the weather, we were lifting the anchor at 1620. Just as we picked the anchor up north of Tankerton jetty a monohull came in to anchor. The fishing tinnies that were fishing south of us this morning, were out again: ten this time, and to the north. The tide was assisting us to travel north at around 8 knots.

We passed two anchored monos toward the top of French Island. We took the inside passage toward Barrallier Island and noted its beaches were covered with pelicans.

Anchor down, and anchor ball up in Chicory Lane at 0545.

