

# Aboard Sengo



## From Victoria to New South Wales

### ROTAMAH ISLAND

From Page 4

### A BUMP ON THE HEAD

Page 11

### HEADING NORTH

From Page 17

## May 2024

A timeline on a boat is never a good thing, but we had one. We had to get to Port Stephens, a 12 hour sail north of Sydney. But we didn't have to be there until mid June - so we figured we had a little bit of time to explore. Having made it into Lakes Entrance in April we took the time this month to visit some of the Gippsland Lakes' 'anchorages' that we hadn't already been to. Ironically the weather in Bass Strait was calmer than it had been, and had we sat out the last bit of the crappy weather that had sent us north in April, we would have had good weather to explore northern Tassie. Indeed one boat that we met at Paynesville did just that. But we weren't going back into the fray. In the Gippsland Lakes we spent time in the new areas of Bunga Arm, tied up to the Rotamah Island jetty, and added to my existing foot injury in April by smashing my head into a dock walkway balustrade!



## The Gippsland Lakes

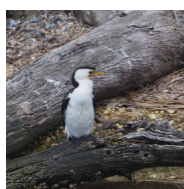
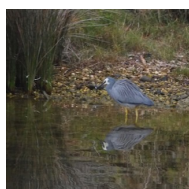
### Duck Arm to Paynesville

1st May 2024. I disturbed a little pied cormorant when I took the sunrise photo this morning. And heard a whistling kite and silver gulls as they flew past at 0745. This was all before Andrew got up. After breakfast, we dropped the mooring and 'headed to town.'

We got ourselves onto a '4 hour' dock in Paynesville around 1100. Last time we were on this particular dock it had been for '4 days.' This time we were only intending to be here the listed '4 hours.' We were waiting for friends to turn up for lunch. Except they didn't. There was, fortunately, no malice involved - just a, rather inconvenient, breakdown in communication, and we realised, quite late, that they weren't turning up today at all. So, around 1300, instead of the expected cafe lunch, we bought a cooked chicken and made up a salad for lunch back on board.

Given the delay we extended the 4-hour until tomorrow (there wasn't an obvious demand for space and suspected no one would tell us off). We filled in the rest of the day with reading and research and I finished a sewing job and finalised Jan, Feb and March newsletters. Dinner was chicken and mayo sandwiches - I went back out to the IGA for the bought bread.

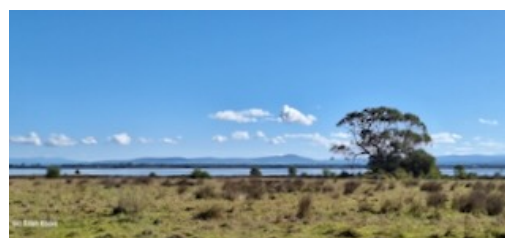
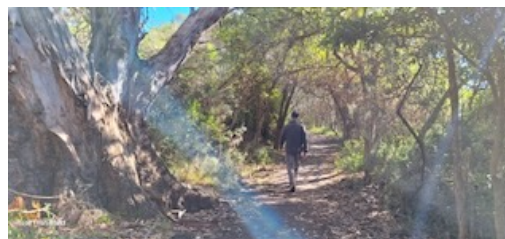
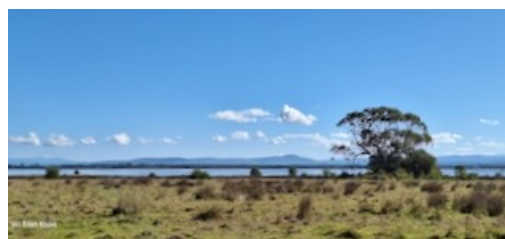
Birds spotted near the marina dock - coots, swans, pelican (flyby), and black and white cormorants (not close enough to work out whether it was a black faced cormorant or a pied cormorant).



### Paynesville

2nd May 2024. For our morning walk we headed toward Eagle Point Bay, skirting the edge of the Fullerton Wetland Area. We have walked this track before although I think last time it was as part of a circuit. We didn't actually see much birdlife. Lunch was back in 'town' with **Koolcid II** (now that we had got the day right), and the late afternoon was spent having drinks at the yacht club after the casual race, thanks to an invitation from D, whom we haven't seen since Darwin in 2016!.

Evening activities were minimal - but we did watch the Italian News.





# Rotamah Island

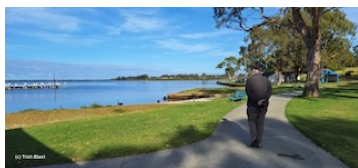
## Exploration West

3rd May 2024. A planned walk before breakfast didn't happen, but after our scrambled eggs we managed a stroll along some of Newlands Arm. Before leaving dock we bought some new flares and said hello to a boat who had come into the Lakes at the same time we had.

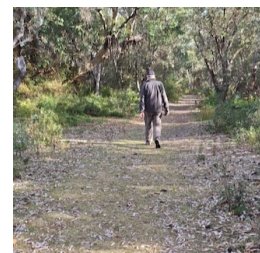
We weren't trying to be antisocial but another cat owner decided to say hello just as we were leaving dock - his timing could have been better. We got the name of his boat - but not his name.

The aim for today's move was Rotamah Island. From Paynesville it looked like the Rotamah Jetty was occupied, but as we approached, the boat in question left. This left the t-head of the jetty free - fortunately, as the jetty is quite short, and the depth of water quite shallow (our depth sounder read 0.00 on the way over), and we wouldn't have fitted behind it.

After tying up we went for a walk toward the western end of the island. This activity wasn't as inspiring as I had hoped. Whilst I was growing up, Rotamah Island was synonymous with a place you went to watch birds - specifically migratory birds but The Gippsland Lakes is full of sedentary species as well.. There are a couple of buildings here, that at one point would have hosted birding groups. Unfortunately they are now both closed and out of bounds; one still has bedding in it and I hate to think how skanky



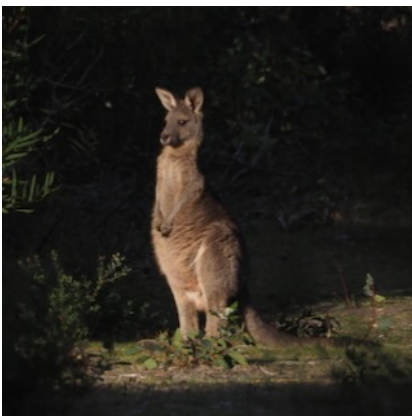
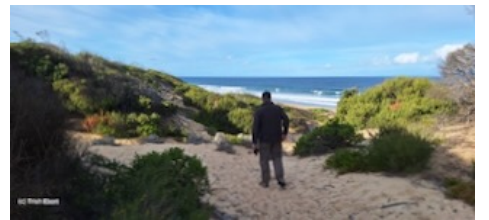
that is, and one building has orange tape around the verandah and smashed glass windows (which, if the orifices aren't sealed up, will probably lead to deterioration of the entire building if too much water gets in). The header water tank is half-off its high stand, (and a hazard if it falls off), and the small building that had a plastic barrier around it to indicate 'no entry 'Asbestos' now has the soft barrier deliberately pushed aside and the walls have been smashed. Apparently the main bird-watching tower is closed and collapsing (we didn't see it) but the track to the other hide had at one stage had soft orange 'no access' tape across it as well (someone had trampled this down but we didn't investigate).



The tracks are clearly not maintained (despite the current Paynesville tourist brochure indicating they are 'clearly defined') and the toilet block at the picnic tables near the jetty is closed. There is notice that an alternate is available at the group camping site around one kilometre away but we didn't see this. We were also notified by the mono who came back to moor on the inside of the jetty overnight that these toilets have been closed for some time - possibly up to a year. Posts with numbers on them which I think signified an interpretive trail at one stage, are deteriorated or broken, or pulled to the ground. The information board on the interps shelter that is located on land as you exit the jetty has been removed, and the only thing that looks vaguely new is the sign signifying joint management by the local aboriginal group and Parks Victoria. The money for that could have been better spent elsewhere as clearly neither group is managing (or maintaining) anything!

Birds - coot, swan, tern (sp?), pied oystercatcher, crimson rosella, king parrot, galah, rainbow lorikeet, little wattle bird, duck (sp?), white-faced heron, magpie, kookaburra

Grey kangaroos were spotted around the buildings.





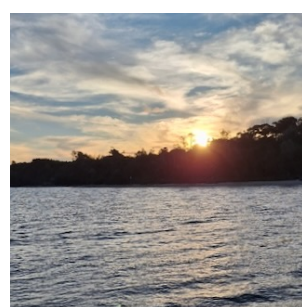
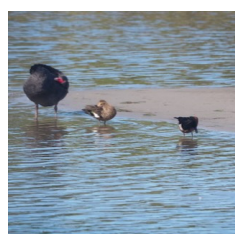
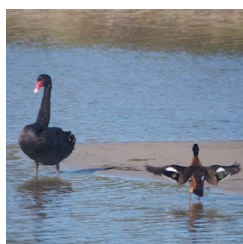
## Rotamah Island - Exploration East

4th May 2024. Our exploration east today was no more inspiring than yesterday. We missed the old main birdwatching tower but again noted closed toilets and buildings. We started our walk around 1100 so there was minimum bird life, although whip-birds were heard at 'Whip-bird Track'. The tracks seemed more overgrown than those that we had traversed yesterday on the other end of the island.

Back at boat we had a salad lunch. After thinking that a defrost of the fridge a couple of days ago would solve our freezer issues we were disappointed to find it defrosting on its own again today. We passed all remaining, salvageable, frozen meat into the Engle portable unit, and put a bottle of water in the our freezer to test it. We turned the freezer up. It was clearly not coping.

## To Bunga Arm

At around high tide we untied ourselves from the jetty and followed our track away from Rotamah Island to the channel to head toward Bunga Arm. With a bit of contortion (me) we tied up to one of two moorings at the eastern end of the arm.





## Bunga Arm

5th May 2024. We were up at 0730 to be greeted by a very light drizzle. A pelican and several swans were feeding on the north shore. The sun was trying to show itself through a mixed thickness of clouds. Essentially today was a lazy day - and our only activity was a tinnie ride in the afternoon to the end of Bunga Arm (on a dropping tide so we may not have got as far as we could have on a higher tide). Background noise consisted of the constant mumble of the ocean

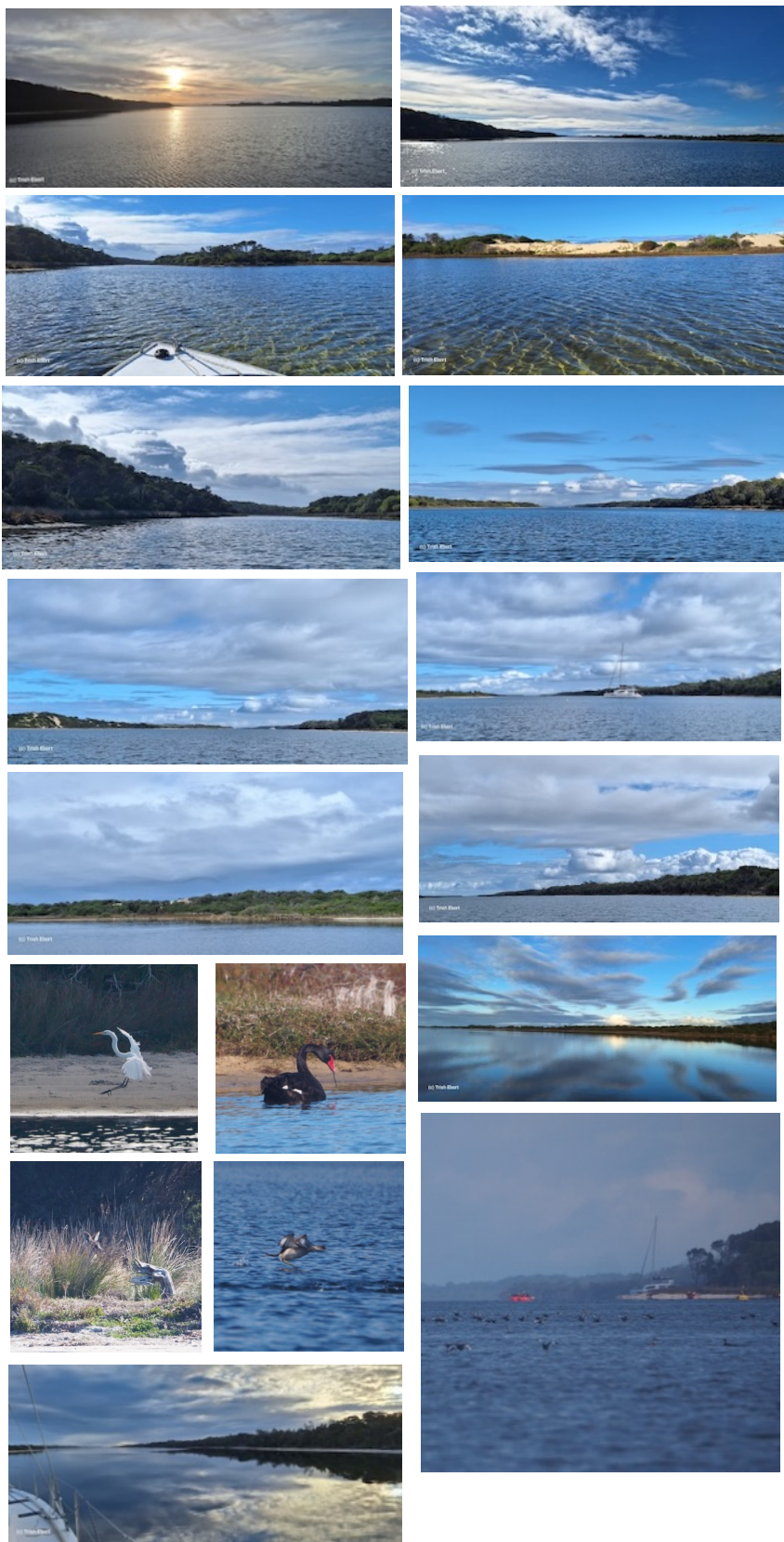
Rain had been predicted late morning to late afternoon. We took our adventure based on the rain radar, leaving the boat at 1030 and getting back at 1215. Clouds were coming in but when we got back on board the bom.gov.au app had rain dissipating before it reached the coast. Drizzle and complete grey filled the sky at 1340 - and I had fortunately put the now dry fenders and barge board away. Rain proper (as opposed to drizzle) came down for a few minutes in the evening.

There was no power boat action but we were passed by two groups of kayakers (we suspect a school group) just before we got back to Sengo. We had noticed a couple of eskies on the shore towards the end of the Arm - perhaps that had something to do with them (at first glance we had both thought they were bee hives).

Birds: swans, pied cormorant (?). Great cormorant?, white-faced heron, great egret, hundreds of grebes, duck (sp?), pacific black duck, silver gull, lapwing, white bellied sea eagle and harrier (?)

Little wattle birds were heard and small birds were seen on shore but too quick to identify.

We checked the water bottle in the freezer - after initially starting to freeze up, the water inside was melting again.





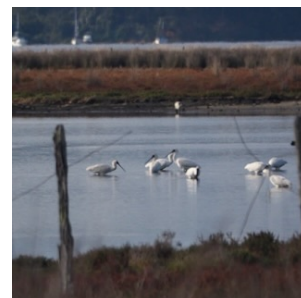
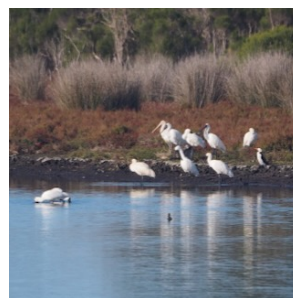
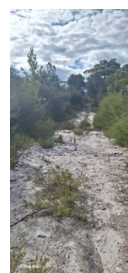
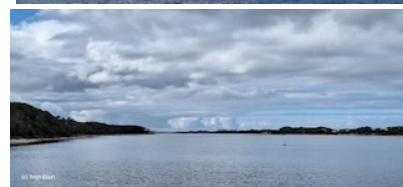
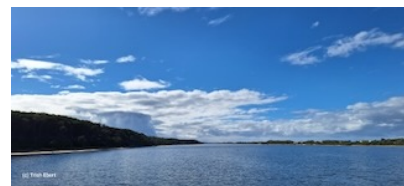
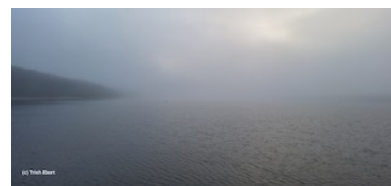
6th May 2024. Morning fog as predicted. The morning birds: cravens and swans. We heard rainbow lorikeets. The grey morning turned into a lovely afternoon.

It was a land-based exploration today - taking the tinnie to a nearby small beach which was situated below what looked, according to satellite photos, to be the end of a vehicle track. The scramble up the hill to the track was not hard - others had come before us, but I was glad I hadn't suggested the really long loop walk - the foot track along Bunga Arm seemed completely overgrown. The vehicle track we followed wasn't exactly clear either and some of the small loop that we ended up traversing involved getting ourselves over the obstacles of fallen trees. Again - these are non-maintained tracks - which is a bit odd. The access isn't clear and seems to possibly be (for the road) via private property from an official jetty landing near some houses on the northern side of the land mass - but there was a sign regarding a boundary for deer hunters, so we guess that hunters may visit on a semi-regular basis. We walked until a gate blocked us, crossing the exit channel of a large dam. Here we turned around and looped back via old tracks.

We started walking at 1334. We were back on boat at 1600.

Birds for the day: spoon bills, white ibis, kookaburras, lapwings, wrens, new holland honeyeater, crimson rosella, black swans, ducks (species?), white-faced heron, quail (too quick to be identified), magpies. Sea eagles soared over the Arm at sun down.

Animals: kangaroo (grey), fox, wombat hole?







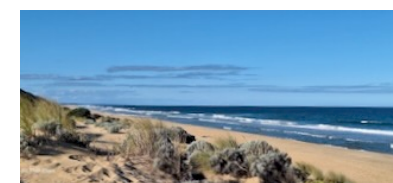
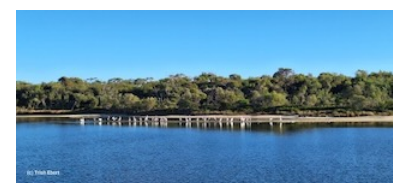
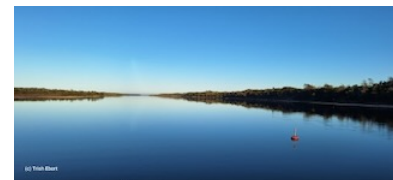
## Bunga Arm mooring to Steamer Landing Jetty

7th May 2024. We were up 0715, the mooring was dropped 0740 and we motored back down our 'track' towards Steamer Landing. My idea had been to pick up one of the public moorings near the Steamer Landing jetty. Given we were on a dropping tide, and based on the chart we had, the western-most mooring was the safest to get to to start with, but before we picked it up Andrew informed me we had 0.3 meters under our keel. Normally that would suffice - but not with today's predicted tide. I was happy to try the other mooring (at which the chart indicated possibly deeper water), Andrew however wanted to try the jetty.

As we had passed the jetty a few minutes previously there had been five boats on it. Crucially however the outermost spot looked empty. It also looked long enough for us. It wasn't until we got closer that we realised however that the outermost spot was a red zone - a permit zone only. One powerboat skipper was encouraging. The commercial boat comes here once every couple of days and he was here yesterday, he said - I am happy to help you tie up. One mono boat skipper was even more encouraging - 'we are leaving soon'. So we braved fate, and with the help of a whole heap of hands we found ourselves tied up to a red zone. When the leaving mono left an hour or so later, the mono behind us, bless his cotton socks, was happy to move down the line (we pulled the boat by hand), so we too could follow suit - we didn't have to dislodge ourselves from the jetty to land again.

We had a good chat to the mono behind us (who had a dachshund - so we got to pat S) before they left to go back to civilisation and work. In fact, by the time we went for a walk all the boats that had been on the jetty when we came in had gone. After our very brief walk on 90 Mile Beach - too cold and windy to really enjoy it, two other boats had come in. By evening we were on our own.

Given we now had a freezer issue, we were shocked to find we had a bilge issue as well (starboard side). It took a while to discover, thankfully, that the leak was internal!





## Steamer Landing Jetty to Paynesville

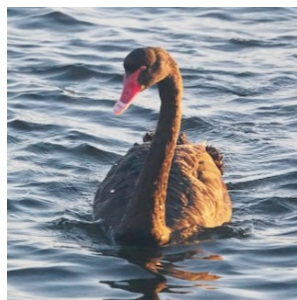
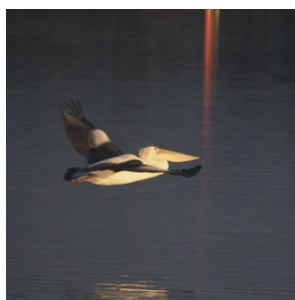
8th May 2024. I thought the flyby of pelicans in the sun as I came up the stairs was pretty special...and then I looked out the back!

Looking out the window toward the jetty, the ropes looked pretty low. Did we get high tide right; this mornings high was 30cm less than yesterdays. We extricated ourselves from the jetty a few minutes after high tide and motored toward Paynesville.

Plan A had been to attach ourselves to the jetty at Sperm Whale Head today, then come across to Paynesville to victual tomorrow, before heading to Picnic Arm to hide from-the coming blow on Friday. But checking MetEye this morning showed we had a potential slightly grumpy easterly coming on this afternoon, so that plan wasn't going to work. Plan B was to push our luck on the 4hour dock (which chatting to another boatie I found may have reverted to 48 hours anyway) at Paynesville. Plan C was pick up one of the public moorings at Paynesville so we were off dock but still very close to be able to go for a walk. We chose Plan C..eventually, after a brief stay on dock to pick up food - it was a very easy pick up.

The wind had started to pick up and whilst not strong, it was chilly.

I cant tell you what time we docked at Paynesville, firstly behind a big Lagoon and then back on the blue dock we were on a few days ago. I can thank J and the crew from HG for their assistance (J twice). What I did take note of was that it was after shopping and lunch when we left dock and tied up to a mooring on the western end of Russell Island. Swans were chortling. Traffic could be heard and the sun was still shining.



## Koala spotting on Raymond Island - eventually

9th May 2024. It was a cold morning - slippers didn't seem enough, and even Andrew had socks on! Shortly after 0900 I could feel the outside temperature warming up. Just. So we determined we would head out at 1000 (ish), and go koala spotting on Raymond Island. The closest shore to us would involve an anchor and getting our feet wet. The other option was to find a spot on the public jetty near the ferry, and tie the tinnie up there. With that preference settled on we avoided the ferry (crossing behind it) and headed toward the walkway on the land side of the public jetty. The idea had been to get off the tinnie and walk it along to tie it up on the walkway railings - that way we weren't taking up any of the jetty dock space. Great in theory - but my visor blocked my vision to the walkway arms, and in practice, I power-drove my head into the walkway beams as I was getting out of the tinnie. The bang on the top of the head was bad enough. My hand went to the top of my head in automatic sympathy. The crack at the base of my neck where it went into my spine was audible. And then I checked my hand. It was covered in thin blood. And lots of it. And yes, head injuries tend to bleed a lot. And yes, I have thin blood - but this was coming through the cap!

I did burst into tears - more from shock than anything else, and after Andrew had used some of our drinking water to wash some of the blood away, and had given me a roll bandage to hold on the bleeding 'hole', we headed back across to the mainland, tied up on the jetty outside the sailing club, and walked to the medical centre.



I was seen to mainly by a nurse, but a visiting doctor did check if my neck could turn (45 degrees - I wonder why she chose that angle). My eyes were checked, my memory was checked (although my answer to 'what day is it,' was 'I don't know, I have no b\*\*\*\* idea, we live on a boat, we don't keep track of that sort of thing.') I was given a tetanus shot (even though my head didn't directly touch metal), and I was told that I should rest for the next few hours (until I got my 'equilibrium back' - the walk around Raymond Island looking for koalas should wait). The nurse's advice to Andrew was to keep an eye on me and if I did anything odd then call an ambulance and get me to Bairnsdale Hospital immediately. Both Andrew and I chuckled. I am pre menopausal - I have been doing odd things for quite some months now. Her response "Good luck with telling the difference." (I think it helped that she was the about the same age as me and probably understood completely).



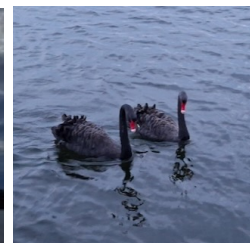
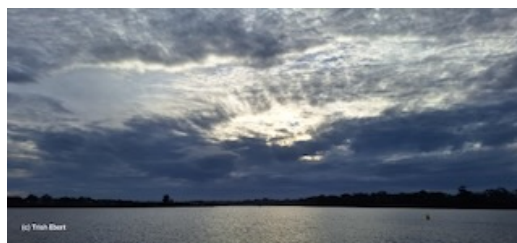
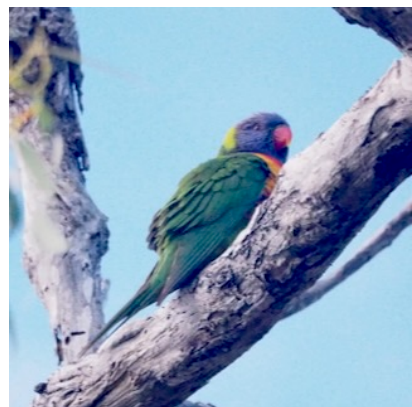
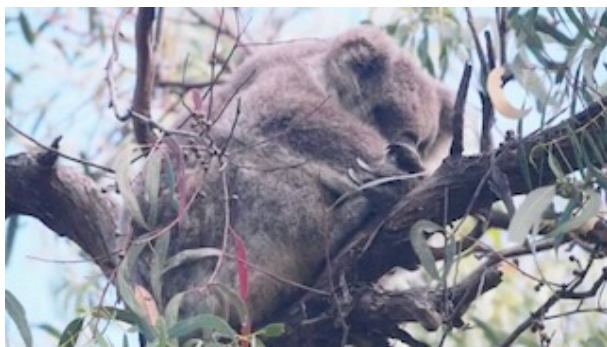
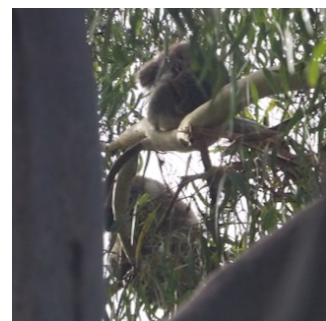
So, instead of koala spotting, we headed to the supermarket to get lunch items and then back to boat to take it easy for a couple of hours.



We did eventually get across to Raymond Island - mid afternoon. We saw 12 koalas (apparently that is a low score). And we were back in boat before 1600 to deal with the leak in the bilge!

Birds: black swans, lapwing, little black cormorant, black faced cormorant, little pied cormorant?, grebe, darter, silver gull, pied butcherbird, magpie, mudlark, common bronze-wing, eastern rosellas, crimson rosella, rainbow lorikeets, sulphur crested cockatoos, noisy miners, grey shrike thrush, blue wrens, white ibis, great heron, coot, duck (green head small drab female), pacific black duck, welcome swallow, galah, pelican

Grey kangaroos were spotted near the boat on the end of Russell Island. - but they were too quick for me to get a photo



## Picnic Bay

10th May 2024. The mooring was dropped at the end of Raymond Island at 0905. The mooring was picked up in Picnic Bay, off Duck Arm, at 0940, after motoring across. There was no wind - which is exactly how I like it if I have to pick up a mooring - particularly when contortions are involved in picking up a mooring too close to the water's surface, and where one has to put oneself at risk to do so. I managed to get one line on - but given the situation and the stretch now required to get to the metal loop, Andrew had to use his length to get the second line in - I am, quite simply, just too short!

According to the Gippsland Ports Website there are three moorings at the start of Picnic Bay before the power-line - but only two exist in reality - the next closest mooring is clearly beyond the powerlines - which are too low for us to contemplate.

Another boat (mono sailing boat) came in to pick up the second mooring at the start of the Bay around lunch time - wind speeds had picked up significantly and I had noticed four sails out on the main body of water to our east. The second mooring's metal loop is lower than the one we picked up, and I wondered how they were going to manage - between losing their boat hook and I guess much frustration, they eventually picked the mooring up - by reversing to it - their transom only a matter of cm off the water's surface.

The third mooring - on the other side of the powerlines, was picked up by a motor cruiser. - I didn't see it come in. - I was too busy downstairs decanting the saltwater out of the bilge - we have found a leaky seal for the toilet in-pipe. - something else to fix when we get a chance, but in the meantime it means we have to decant the bilge every-time we go to the toilet!

I spent the day doing April's diary notes, Duolingo and reading *Alaska*. Breakfast was had (egg salad) once we had picked up the mooring in Picnic Bay (around 1000). Lunch was an Apple loaf.

Wind gusts that we noted were up over 22 knots. The Gippsland Ports website had higher readings.



There was a whistling kite on a dead tree as we came into the bay. After securing ourselves we noticed it's mate flying by with nesting material - and then we noticed the nest. We also noticed when the wind was up that both birds disappeared. Other bird entertainment included two white-bellied sea-eagles, a paddock full of straw-necked ibis, pied? and little black cormorants drying their wings on a dead tree on shore to the north east, swans sheltering from the worst of the weather, along with coots, at the point, and pelicans flying by. The occasional grebe also showed up, and we had flybys of sulphur crested cockatoos. We had started with swallows this morning in town.



11th May 2024. The sky was greyish but not as windy as expected. The mono dropped its mooring and left late morning. The powerboat stayed put. Kookaburras were heard, black cockatoos flew over (a small flock - we weren't quick enough to check which species). Other birds: swans, grebes, cormorants, ducks, white ibis, whistling kite (heard).

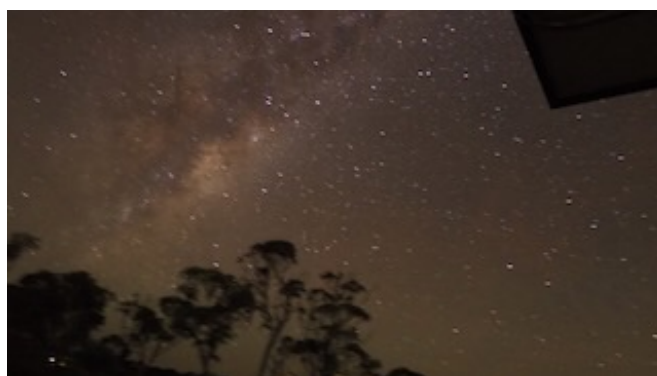
I spent the day reading and sorting accommodation for the next NZ challenge. It rained just before sundown (light drizzle).



12th May 2024. The plan today was a social visit in the morning, and then a move east so we were closer to Lakes Entrance in preparation for a jump to leave the Gippsland Lakes. The social event happened. Catching up with D one-on-one (rather than with the rest of the mob at the sailing club) was lovely. The move however didn't happen. By the time we got back to boat the wind had picked up and in such a direction that we would be directly exposed at the proposed next mooring; which was a pity because there was a park nearby it and we could have explored somewhere new.

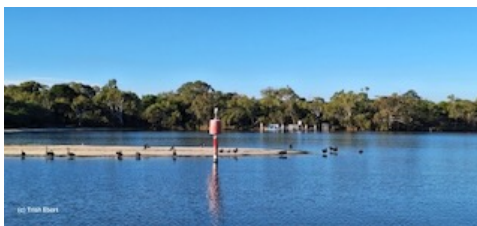
Unlike last night where skies were covered in cloud, the skies tonight were clear and I had a go at photographing south. The Aurora that everybody was raving about wasn't in its full glory apparently (that had passed on the previous nights), and with the naked eye the sky looked black. Of course on a moving boat any photos were going to be fuzzy, but I had a go and got one 'reasonable under the circumstances' photograph. Admittedly I didn't stay up until the wee hours of the morning as suggested the best show would be - it was just far too cold.

Birds: swans, pelican, grebe, pied cormorant, black faced cormorant, little black cormorant, sulphur crested cockatoo, sea eagles, whistling kites, ?duck,



## Picnic Bay to Lakes Entrance.

13th May 2024. We dropped the mooring shortly after 0830. The sky was clear. There wasn't much wind, it was a cold morning, and we motored east, with a dropping tide so we had a push. We were delighted to see three dolphins (the Gippsland Lakes has its own subspecies and numbers are minimal (or at least were several years ago when the interps boards were written), and one relaxing seal.

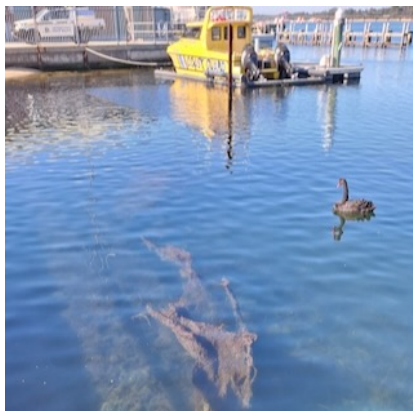
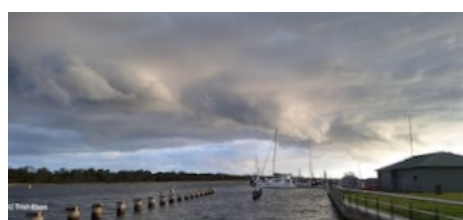


Our first task was fuel. Given we hadn't landed at the fuel dock before and we didn't know how long the fuel line was going to be, we spent some time transferring fuel over from the starboard to port tank. It was a good move. Landing on the fuel dock was easy, although messy. The poles at either end of the dock sport the plastic owls that are often on boats to ward other birds off - these ones clearly don't work - there was pelican poop everywhere (I had to wash my hands from contamination from the end of the rope and clean the bottom of my shoes).

A boat helped us on dock on our favourite spot when we got around the corner to Lakes Entrance- the end of the long section of the Bulmer Jetty. After a latish lunch we stocked up on food getting back on boat around 1600. I then washed the clears and tops of the hatches, and we looked at timing for our jump out of The Entrance. We spent the evening reading.

Birds: galah, whistling kite, swans, pelicans, grebes, lapwings, tern (sp?), pied/bf cormorant, little black cormorants (flock).

14th May 2024. It was light when I got up - the sun was just coming up over the eastern end of Cunningham Arm. A white-faced heron made a flyby. My first job of the morning was to put covers on the cleaned hatches (those that I had covers for - a couple have disintegrated so much they need chucking - another couple are disintegrating but they are the best I've got at the moment). I also made a loaf of bread for our travel and put the damp washing out the back to dry. It was cold with a slightly chilly wind outside when I went for a short walk around 0800.





## Bobbing Around Bass Strait.

Lakes Entrance to Eden -15th - 16th May 2024

15th May 2024. I was up really early. By breakfast I had decanted the bilge and made muffins for lunch for the next journey. We were preparing for potentially three days.

After breakfast we went for walk to Bullock Island. We hadn't walked to Bullock Island before. There is a cafe listed on google.maps but it is mainly a fish and chip shop (and fish monger). What we didn't expect to find was a proper cafe establishment on the water's edge. The location is opposite Flagstaff Jetty at the entrance to Cunningham Arm. It is a location with a lovely view - unfortunately, because they had staff shortages, it had poor service. We got back to boat around two hours after we had left.

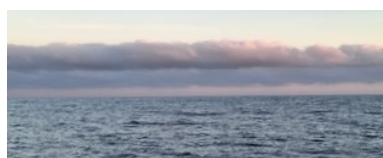
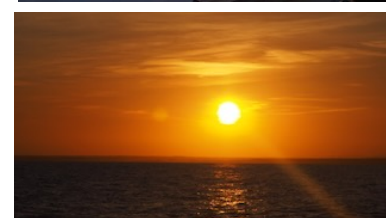
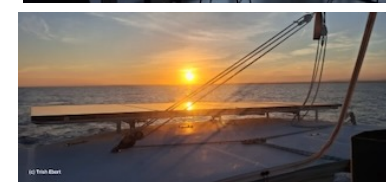
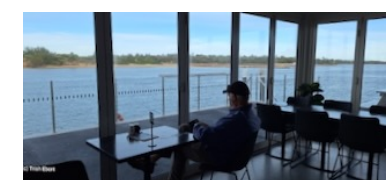
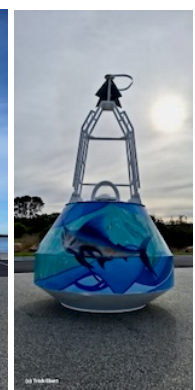
Andrew thought he might have a go at fixing the leaky pipe/bilge issue before we left. The problem is with a pump. We have three - that is, two spare on the port side. One of these however has extra connections and is best left alone. Removal of the pump we weren't using took him ten minutes. Terrific. If only the replacement took that long. It took longer and it didn't quite work. There was still an issue. At 1330 he gave up.

At 1400 we left 'The Lakes.' Sails were up by 1430. Three dolphins escorted us for a short time at 1440. Then we had lunch.

Looking around I thought I saw brown boobie but that doesn't make sense, so perhaps I was looking at the silhouetted side of a gannet. Albatrosses bobbed around us on a semi regular bases.

At this stage we still had one engine on, swapping from port to starboard at 1715, the idea being to swap back once we were off shift and sleeping.

Around 1800 the wind picked up a bit but also went more west so I turned south-east and starboard 5 deg. The engine was turned off just before 1830. The only sounds now were water past the hulls and squeaking of some mainsheet bits. Apparent wind speed was 13, then 14, then 15 knots. The only issue was the direction - changing to west to come up directly behind us. I turned off to starboard a bit more to help us along



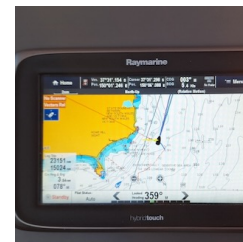
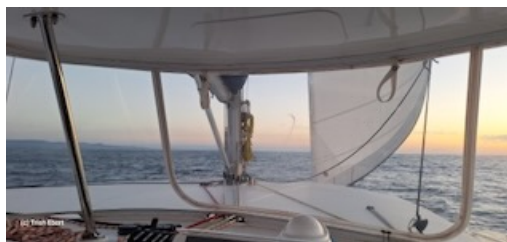
16th May 2024. I found myself really tired at 0300, and whilst I would have normally let Andrew sleep a bit longer if he needed it, I pulled him out of bed to take over - I didn't want to fall asleep at the helm. He was sleeping in the back cockpit because he thought I might need him before changing course. I didn't. I was back on shift at 0600. We tacked before Andrew went to bed. We passed Gabo Island at around 0615. It was still dark

The expected significant drop of wind for the 0700 tranche happened at 0655 - - wind speeds halved. And our speed suffered. Wildlife was plentiful - we saw ten albatross before sunrise.

At 0720 I could see the sails of a boat we knew that had left Lakes Entrance a lot later than we had. They are however a much faster boat. Radio chatter was not clear but we heard what we assume was conversation between whale watching boats.

At 0810 I put the port engine on (Andrew was sleeping in the starboard hull). I could handle the drop of boat speed from 10 to 5 knots given we were expecting a drop in wind, but under 2 knots boat speed was not useful given the decision we were going to have to make in a few hours. The engine was off again at 0845. The wind had picked up again. At 0944 we were travelling at 8.7 SOG.

The engine went on again at 1010. The other boat had finally passed us - .now with its sails up, and I guess the crew had the same idea that we originally had, to sail obliquely to the northerlies and keep going to Sydney. However, we changed our mind, having decided that we had had a pretty good passage and we didn't want to spoil it, and by 1020, the genoa was



furled and the main dropped. At this time there was essentially no wind. At one point I saw 0.7 True on the gauges.

Of course now there was another decision to make, as the predicted wind was due to change. Do we anchor with a lee shore and wait for the southerly wind to kick in, or do we anchor to the north of the bay with everyone else, and move across when the wind changed.

Our preference is always Nullica Bay. Whilst it has a reputation of being swell-affected at times, the other alternative, the slightly more protected East Boyd Bay, is where everybody else goes. We don't like crowded anchorages and we like to have a back up - at Nullica Bay if we drag we have open water. At East Boyd Bay if we drag we have a jetty. And besides - the Navy had blocked off East Boyd Bay today anyway!

The morning temperature, now that we had come a bit further north, was noticeable; after being chilly for goodness knows how long, this morning it was really hot in the helm!



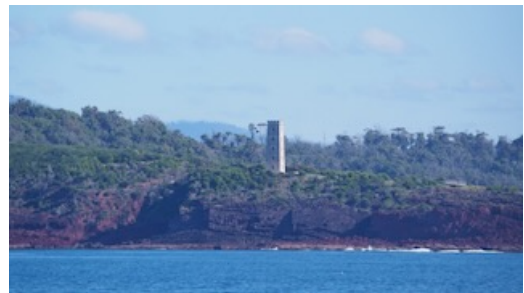


A dolphin welcomed us in to Two Fold Bay around 1145. The anchor was down on a lee shore at 1255 in Nulluca Bay. An hour after this the clouds started coming in and were hiding the orb; it was getting cold again. We closed the front flap of the helm station and hunkered inside.

We spent the rest of the day reading and listening to mind numbing YouTube.

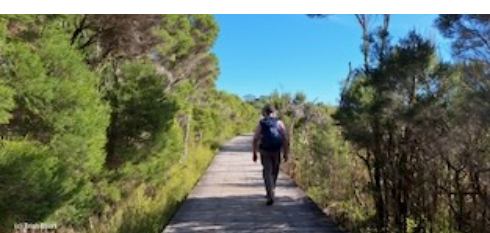
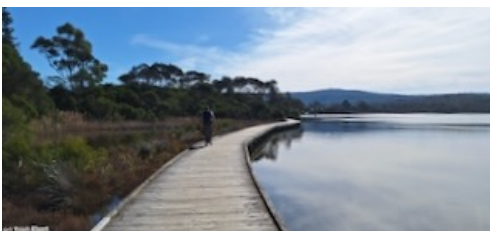
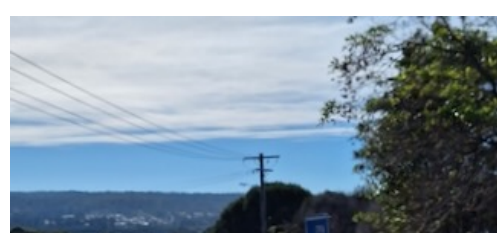
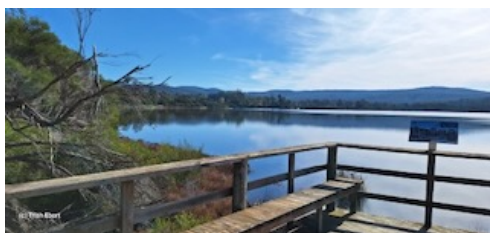
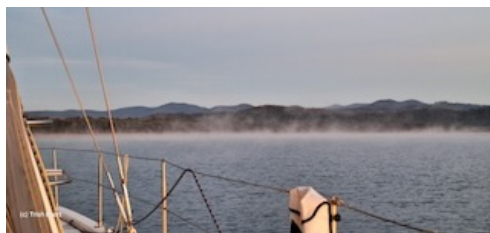
On a check outside at 1925 we were facing south east. The wind had changed and the lights of the Eden Harbour could be seen out our back. Andrew went to bed just after 2100. I stayed up a little longer

A rescue! During the day I had heard from the volunteer wildlife officer in Lakes Entrance. Yesterday I had reported a swan with a fishing line stuck in its mouth. From a purely karma point of view I was not endeared to this swan as it had chased, in order to kill, the cygnet of another bird. However I was loathe to see it suffer. Thanks to the efforts of the wildlife officer and her rounding up of a swan researcher, a retired vet and a retired paramedic (the last two attached to the coast guard), the swan was captured and released from its torture (It couldn't forage with the line stuck from its bill to its legs).



## A walk around Eden

17th May 2024. I had suggested to Andrew that we perhaps leave boat around 1000 - hopefully by that time the fog had gone and the air was a little less chilly. Had I thought about the planned walk a little harder, I would have suggested we leave earlier because 1000 was too late. 1000 was low tide (ish). To walk the circuit I had planned you need to cross an inlet - which you need to do at low tide. Clearly I had to make alternate plans. We still walked up the hill to Eden township, we still had a cuppa and a nibble at a local coffee shop, and we still walked along the road that travels adjacent Aldinga Beach. But instead of crossing the inlet we headed back to town around part of the shores of Curralo Lagoon along some of the boardwalk. We took a shortcut back to town, and had lunch in the pub (consciously aware that the southerly was coming up the coast by checking the bom.gov.au observations). We also took a very short detour past a monohull to whom we had introduced ourselves in Lakes two weeks ago. They seem to have some similar





hobbies to us and perhaps at a later date we can catch up with them again - however, the wind was picking up, so getting back to boat was a priority. The wave height in front of the attenuating wall equated to a bumpy, but fortunately not wet, (which I was expecting) ride back to boat.

We had left boat around 1000. We were back on board after a lovely stroll and stretch of the legs around 1500.

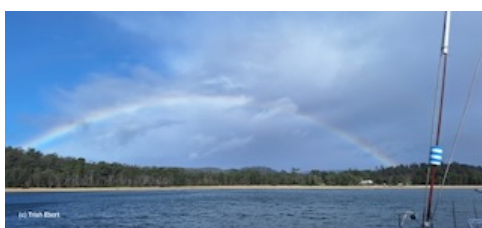
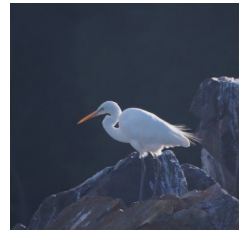
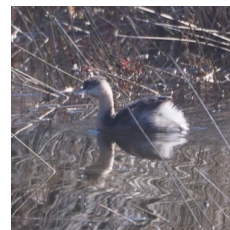
Bird-list: lapwing, willy wagtail, yellow thorn-bill, bell miner, blue wren, coot, domestic duck, pacific black?, other ducks, galah, sulphur crested cockatoo, raven, magpie, welcome swallow, fire-tails, egret (sp?) and azure kingfisher. Last time we were here we saw spoonbills but that was further around along the boardwalk than we ventured today.

We also patted a (minature/teacup) Chihuahua and a very big German Shepherd (king shepherd and husky).

## Eden is not necessarily Paradise

18th May 2024 - 21st May 2024

I spent the 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st May in bed with body aches and pains, and not a lot of energy. I suspect part of this was my fault; I had walked around with the big camera draped diagonally across my shoulder (which always gives me a few aches), and I had got back to boat and clove-oiled the ceiling of the helm station (which also gives me a few aches). However as I was not hungry for most of the four days I wondered whether there was something else going on as well. A few other odd symptoms may have also equated to delayed concussion results.



## From Eden to Broken Bay

22nd May 2024 - 24th May 2024

I've got my verve back...but the wind predictions have lost theirs!

22nd May 2024. I almost jumped out of bed today. I felt I had so much energy. I knew I didn't want to overdo it, but whilst Andrew was still asleep I was prepared to finish off prepping the boat. I had the dishes away, the mooring lines fixed, the helm station clear and any other obvious fly-about-able objects shut down.

I clearly had some chutzpah - even Andrew commented on my energy levels.

We moved across to one of the free moorings off Cocura Beach (my brain wasn't quite in the frame of mind to have to mingle with other boats behind the wave attenuator), and despite my lack of appreciation for these style, (they bump excessively), tying up went without a hitch.

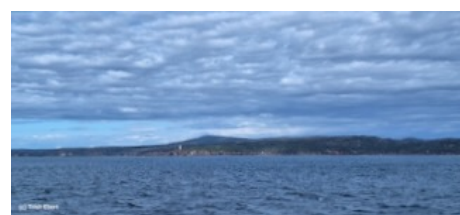
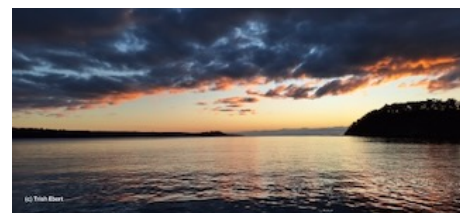
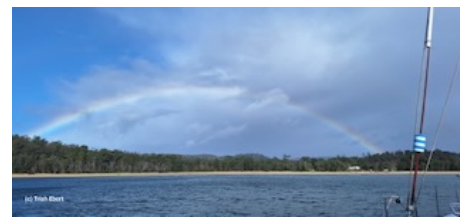
After having breakfast we were tied up to the wharf (tinne) in Eden around 0900. I made it up the hill at a reduced-to-normal pace (we took the main road rather than the walkway just in case I collapsed and needed a hitch), and had done a quick shop at Coles and picked up my earring (left at the pub a few days ago) and were back at boat by 1020.

On the way back to boat we disturbed a great heron near the steps the tinnie was tied up to, and noticed the pelican again on his rock-wall perch (he had been there a few days ago).

After hog-tying the tinnie down, and rescuing the bridle, we were ready to go. The mooring was dropped at 1050. We motored out of Two Fold Bay with no sails up.

The sails went up and the engines were off at 1130. 'Wind speed seemed slightly higher than predicted...and we just hoped it would stay that way

Well it didn't. And for a while we were wallowing around 2.5 to 4 knots - it wasn't comfortable. With the help of an engine we proceeded forward and then east-ish, as that is where we were, according to forecasts, going to pick up more wind. Eventually the engine went off and we settled down to the realisation that, given we were quite a way offshore, a 40 hr



trip (if we got that far) was likely to take a lot longer!



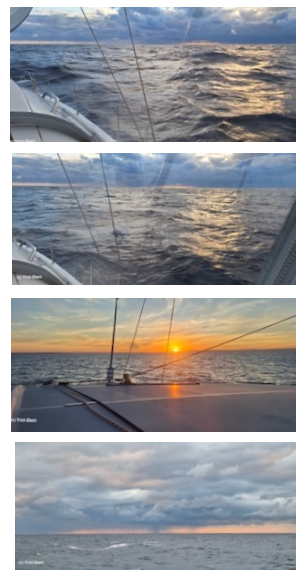
23rd May 2024. 40 or 50 nm out wasn't a problem if you didn't want to check the weather. The sail was quick, but not too frisky. All went well and I settled into my three hour break at 0300. And then all of a sudden Andrew was asking me to get up again. I don't know what time it was, I didn't check. All I knew was that one of the mainsheets had dislodged itself from the block and it needed Andrew to fix it. In order to do this he needed to be outside. Therefore I needed to be in the helm. The sea state wasn't rough as such - we were travelling reasonably flat - but we were travelling along with 20 knots True. The boat was going at a fair clip and Andrew was splayed on his stomach for balance. The use of a knife to cut the offending broken line (after we had secured the loose line to the side of the boat) didn't work, so the block had to be removed and manoeuvred from there. Whilst I was downstairs trying to find a new block I heard a lot of clicks on the deck. And then a scream. We were lucky. Two large pieces of the block had fallen to the deck - but no further - I was able to retrieve them.

In the end a jury-rigged configuration would get us through. We took a deep breath. Our adrenalin had been pumping. We had solved the problem. I could go back to bed. And then the bilge pump light went on. I looked at Andrew. He looked at me. He did volunteer to go down and decant it however, given the new setup with the main I thought he best stay in the helm. So I stuck my head in the bilge, got as much water out as I could and eventually fell back into bed. It was now around 0430!

By the time I woke up at 0600 and took the next shift I had aches and pains all over the body again - at least this time I knew what they were from. The moonset was lovely, and as it started to get light, the sight of land was encouraging. A shearwater flew past at around 0700. Dolphins played with us for a few minutes at 0735. It made my morning.

We had been a long way off shore to enable us to get a good sail. Today however it didn't matter where we were going to be, the wind was dropping everywhere, and this was confirmed when we headed toward land and got back into internet reception. We had contact from one boat who thought we were heading toward Jervis Bay. We had discussed this option but decided to keep going. The reason we looked like we were heading for Point Perpendicular however was that in order not to get caught in the southward current we needed to hug the coast.

As the wind dropped we put an engine on. As it almost completely disappeared we dropped the sails and the second engine on. The wind did pick up later and at 2230 we put the genoa out - we had 10 knots apparent just south of beam - enough wind to turn one engine off. We weren't expecting this wind - it wasn't forecast - but we were grateful. With phone reception Andrew started to ring contractors in regard to a couple of our ongoing issues. We were aiming to stop on dock for a short period of time in Pittwater.



I still didn't get more than 1.5 hrs continuous sleep...Andrew clocked 4!

Sails were dropped again at 1630. Both engines were on at this time

The genoa was put out again at 2030....10 knots apparent plus just south of beam. One engine went off. At this point Andrew came to relieve me early.

I still only had the max tranche sleep of 1.5 hours but got up for 0000 shift feeling more refreshed none the less.

24th May 2024. When I took over shift we were in the middle of the shipping lane off Port Kembla. Andrew swapped the engines over as soon as I was up. Sometime during off-shift I had thought he had done it already, a change in noise woke me at a start at 0430. I was mistaken..but it still means I haven't had a sleep break longer than 1.5 hours for the past 36 hours!

Delightfully there were albatross flybys at 0625. At this time the wind was side on. If we didn't have a broken block we could be pure sailing! Water temperature was down so in theory we weren't in the current; therefore, hopefully, normal tidal rules apply. Boat speed at this time was 6.9 knots.

We watched the sun wake up the Sydney Heads. What great timing!

The genoa was furled at 1035 before we turned into Broken Bay. By 1045 we had confirmed our dock for a week starting Sunday...not ideal in this area when the preference is to be in the national park, and had ordered two replacement fiddle blocks

Around 1120 we picked up a mooring adjacent Halletts Beach. 15 minutes later, the covers were up, windows were open and the kettle was on. We were ready to relax!

We had blinis for lunch...something easy.

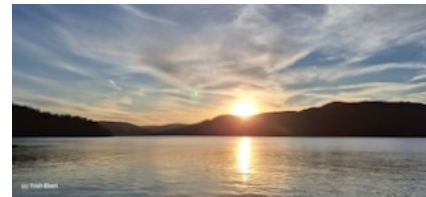
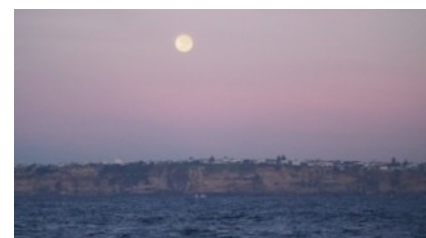
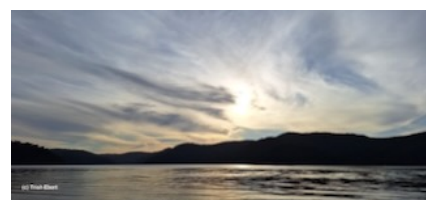
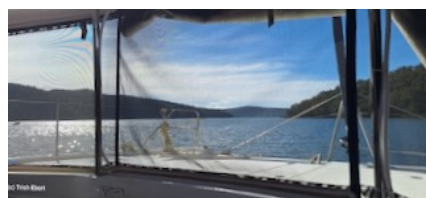
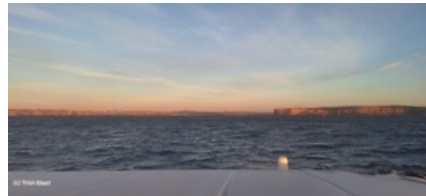
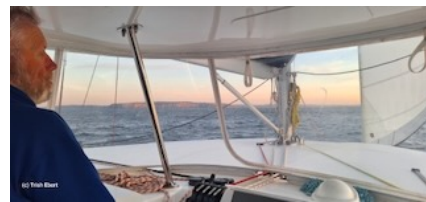
We didn't quite secure the services of the fellow who can look at the fuel sender...hopefully we can find confirmation of a contractor on Monday.

Andrew eventually went for a snooze at around 1500.

I managed a quick wipe down of the lifelines, opened the windows to let in some air, managed some recreational reading, and tidied up the lounge area

Dinner was a warm chicken salad

All moorings were taken overnight plus one boat was anchored on the Creek side of the moorings. Tomorrow is Saturday..my guess is the area will get busy



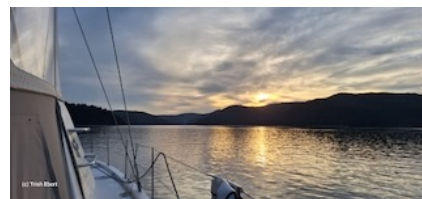


## Kur Ring Gai Chase National Park

25th May 2024. I was up at 0515. But then again I went to bed at 2100. I had of course woken during the night - to the sound of the alarm - which of course, was only in my head. It was also around 0200.... A full five hours after I had gone to bed - finally a sleeping tranche more than 1.5 hours!

At 0700 it was mainly quiet. Andrew was still in bed. Bush birds were twittering from shore. The only disturbance; a large powerboat travelling down the Creek.

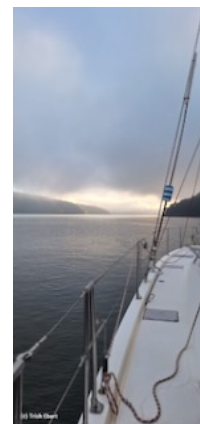
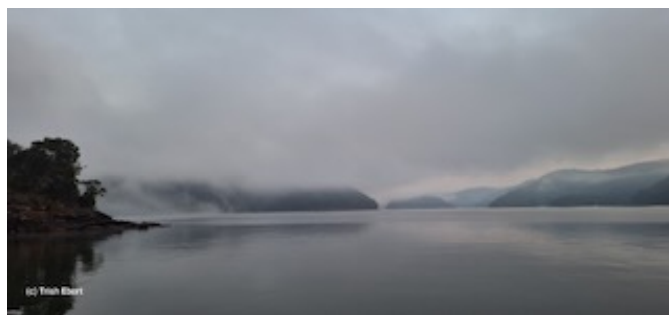
I spent the day eliminating 4000 old emails from our system - it didn't help our storage issues but it needed doing. All moorings had been occupied overnight but sometime during the morning one was dropped. The rest of us did a metaphorical musical moorings and stayed put. There was no wind all day. Normally this would be a great time to get off boat and go exploring but we just wanted to sit and relax. We didn't do much - read mainly. Whilst we had some internet reception there was no television reception; we were able to watch the Italian News but missed out on the AFL Geelong match.



## Kur Ring Gai Chase National Park to Royal Motor Yacht Club; Newport

26th May 2024. I got up around 0700. It was foggy outside. And all was still. We dropped the mooring around 0900. We were on deck around 1100. We didn't actually ask for assistance to get onto dock but two staff arrived as we pulled up - and they seemed to know what they were doing this time. No wind. We found our way to the showers before we actually logged in as no one was in the office. (The same thing happened last time). It was time to take a deep breath and relax and have lunch.

At 1400 we headed up to hear the courtyard entertainer and spent some time chatting to a neighbouring boat. We were back on boat just after 1600. Dinner was sausages and Salad. As most of our clothes are non tumble dry I did a load of clothes around 2030 so I could hang them up out the back overnight. Hopefully they are dry enough in the morning so I can put them in the helm station to finish off.





## Royal Motor Yacht Club, Newport

27th May 2024. I got up around 0515. It was dark outside. I spent the first part of the morning cleaning up more of our emails (clearly I am not good managing them under normal circumstances).

The reason we had come into dock, and indeed expected to remain a week, was, in the main to sort out our recalcitrant freezer. We envisaged this might mean we had to extract the unit from the boat to be assessed at a contractors factory - as had been the case in Geraldton, WA when we last had issues with it. That was of course if we could find a contractor who had the time to look at it. We had made contact with one possibility who indicated on Friday that he would try to see us today. He managed to make it early afternoon. And at first couldn't find anything wrong with the fridge. We were all a bit stumped. As a last resort I mentioned perhaps we had wiring issue. With this possibility in mind the contractor found the problem almost straight away when he went back downstairs to investigate - the connection almost fell apart in his hands. Clearly wiring was our issue. Wiring fixed, the contractor happily walked away. That fix was a lot easier, cheaper and shorter than we expected.

Issue number two was a sender in the port fuel tank. The tank gauge seemed to indicate the tank was full when we knew we had used fuel. We were given a contact this morning who might be able to help us. When Andrew rang him we discovered he was very busy. Of course we expected this - you can't just expect everyone to drop what they are doing at short notice to deal with us. This contractor however gave Andrew a couple of ideas to investigate to get an idea of the

issue before calling the contractor back for the next steps.

So Andrew spent some time in the port fuel tank, extracting the sender and working out that actually it was working - it had just got stuck up the top of the line and needed a nudge to get back to free flow. Sender unstuck and reinstalled we now had no big issues to deal with (apart from our bilge leak).

Technically we didn't need the time on dock now - we could leave. However we had organised a couple of social events that would be easier to attend if we were tied up to land, and we still had a couple of minor maintenance issues to sort out.

28th May 2024. We were heading out to pick up some international currency today. The closest obvious spot was Warriewood but we were not going to walk. We were surprised to find enough money on our Opal Cards to get us on the bus... but my card total would have only got me one way. We had tried to top the cards up at the local store (the internet wasn't working) but we found, when we rocked up, that the store hadn't been doing top-ups since Covid. Things clearly change when you haven't visited a place for a long time. In the end we didn't get the bus back; because we were catching up with friends tomorrow for lunch further up the road we hired a car instead, picking it up at the closest car hire place to the marina.

We picked the car up first, before we went shopping, so we had bit of freedom to explore other places. We got our cash and a couple of items at JBHiFi but ended up driving to Anaconda for shoe laces for Andrew's hiking boots.

Back at boat I did a couple of loads of washing; one could go in the dryer - the other had to be hung out overnight.

## A social excursion

29th May 2024. Today was our mid-week social catchup - and after a quick shop on the way (to pick up a new globe for a fuel gauge, a new zip back for the boom cover, and a international charging plug) we caught up for lunch with W and G - whom we had met on our Kimberley trip last year. The sun was out and we sat outside enjoying the atmosphere of a popular cafe at Balmoral Beach. After a coffee up the hill at Mossman we headed back to boat.

Back at boat I managed one load of washing (in the laundry but to be hung outside) and finished 'The Lion and the Unicorn, a book on British politics.



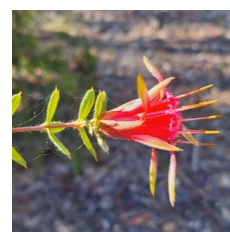
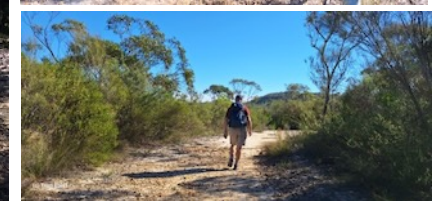
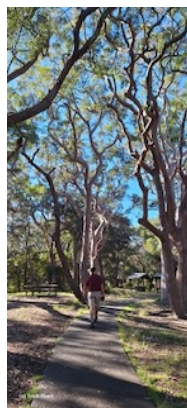
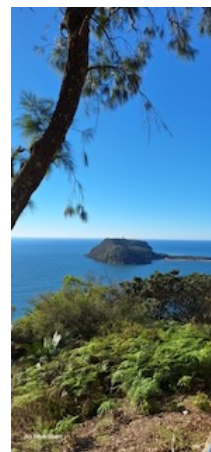
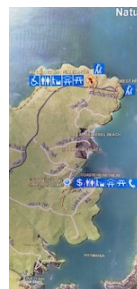


## West Head

30th May 2024. Blue sky! It looked like it was going to be the perfect day for what I had in mind - but plans didn't quite go as expected. Last time we were in Pittwater with a car we did investigate some Kur Ring Gai chase National Park walks but the one I really wanted to do was closed. I can't remember the exact details of why it was closed but I do remember the notification being obvious on the internet. So, to try again today. The weather was perfect. But the track wasn't. You can drive up to the lookout at West Head, the headland that separates Pittwater from the downstream sections of the Hawkesbury and Cowan Creek confluence, but what I really wanted to do was the loop walk, which is reported to be lovely. However, a small section of the loop track was closed (this time since April 11th so it wasn't the same reason as last November) so we had to find an alternative.

Plan B was the Salvation Fire Trail, a track I had seen on the drive in. There were no views on this base trail - although had we branched off for a 5 kilometre extra walk we would have got views over Cowan Creek. I can't say we didn't have time for the extra walk - it was just that we weren't prepared; physically or emotionally. It was 1045 when we started walking and had our original plan been enacted we would have been about halfway through our walk. The only snacks I had were two apples and probably not enough for the later start if it was going to be longer - they would have had to constitute lunch. So we stuck to the base, practically flat, and shortish (3.5 to 5km depending on which interps board you read) track.

The track skirts around the outskirts of a 'hanging swamp' (not that you can really see it because of a hedging of trees) but there was a lot of birdlife; most individuals of which were unfortunately too quick to be identified.



Positive identifications - grey fantail, new holland honeyeater, golden whistler, silvereye.

Possible - red browed tree creeper - didn't get a photo and my guides (hard and soft copy) don't quite match up with what I remember - but I could have a faulty memory.

Other birds for the day, silver gulls, common mynah, sulphur crested cockatoos, cravens.

Afternoon boat jobs included the purchase and installation of new main sheets and Andrew put the new zip piece back.



## Return the car

31st May 2024. The first birds I heard this morning were kookaburras on the hills to our east. It was still dark. When the sun did come over the horizon, we couldn't see it; a uniform grey covered the sky. This morning's job was to return the car - hopefully before the rain came down, which minus a couple of drops, we achieved. (Last time we had returned the car it had been a sunny day and we walked back to boat - it took us several hours).

Drop off at the car hire place was easy and crossing the road we had to run to catch a bus that was about to leave - we only caught it thanks to the intervention (knocking on the door) by a stranger, that halted its progress. There was not much scheduled for the rest of the day. The wind had picked up but we were expecting rain so the laundry runs had finished. We did book a car hire from Newcastle Airport to Sydney Airport for the 13th June. From what we could work out, this was the about the same cost as a luxury, or limousine transfer service from Newcastle. It was of course a lot more expensive than getting there by public transport - but that would have entailed two buses and two trains, and several hours, and we didn't want the hassle..

Lunch was quinoa.

By early afternoon I was disappointed the rain hadn't come in. Some rain had been on the radar to both our west and east but we had missed the showers. Andrew replaced a globe in one of the fuel gauges. The rest of the afternoon was spent milling around boat.