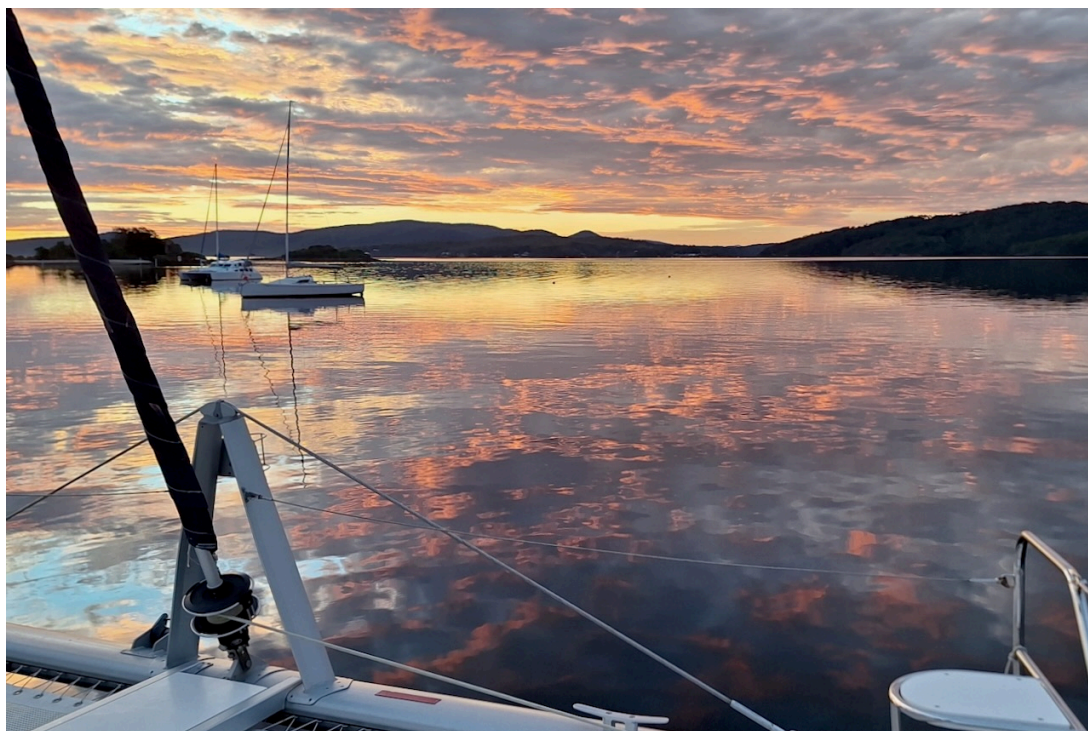


Aboard Sengo



Transition time:
Moving to, and,
getting ready to leave from....

Port Stephens



Transitions:

June and August were, essentially, transition months; firstly involving getting to a place to store Sengo whilst we had an extended off-boat trip, and secondly, sorting stuff out ready to get back to boat life when we got back. There were no exciting adventures, or visiting new places, and days were mainly occupied by 'being as necessary,' and 'doing as necessary.'

Aboard Sengo - June 2024

Aboard Sengo June is, quite frankly, very boring. We didn't do much but get from A to B and prep ourselves for an off-boat excursion - with the odd short walk for exercise in between. The diary notes are basic and make for a less-than-satisfying read.

We were originally due to leave the dock at Pittwater, north of Sydney, on 1st June. But we extended this; firstly for Andrew's birthday so we had the option to go out of lunch if we wanted to (although we just ended up at the restaurant at the Yacht Club), and secondly because of the weather. As it happened, this also allowed us to catch up with family.

When we finally got to Port Stephens to store Sengo, (through an unexpected Strong Wind Warning) we ended up on dock early; to avoid moving about in excessive weather. After we were tied up it was just a matter of tidying up loose ends so we could get away cleanly.

We started the month in Pittwater, north of Sydney, NSW. Sengo ended the month in Port Stephens, north of Newcastle, NSW. (Andrew and I ended the month in the northern hemisphere!)

Pittwater: Royal Motor Yacht Club

1st June 2024. It rained a little overnight, steady but light, but I don't think it lasted long. The bigger tempest was due later this morning although the area to the south of us had got very wet yesterday, and at 0800 Port Stephens (12 hours sail to our north and our next destination), was, according to the rain radar, getting drenched.

Winds outside were calm when I got up. I hadn't yet looked out the back but I had noticed a large mono angle sharply in behind us as I was making brownies for desert for Andrews birthday. That would mean the big powerboat who had been on our stern for the past few days had gone. Skies were grey.

My sleep had been interrupted and I had gotten up in the middle of the night to stretch the back and do half a yoga session...the grumpy back and shoulder probably a result of bad posture on the couch yesterday...I should have been doing more boat jobs!

In the evening we watched Geelong come from behind to win the AFL match against Richmond.

Over the past couple of days, with little sun and lots of rain, the power in our house batteries had drained down a bit; and because we were not attached to shore power, we put the genset on to top them up.

2nd June 2024. Andrew didn't go to bed until 0100 this morning so I didn't expect him up early. I got up around 0615. It was still damp outside but the rain seemed to have stopped. It was however windy; waters around Sydney had an official Gale Warning!

I spent some of the day on diary notes. There was no sun today and whilst we had enough power for tonight, given the forecast, we will probably need another genset run tomorrow.

The highlight of the day was catching up with family for lunch.

We don't normally leave a dock in the afternoon, and due to inclement weather, we extended our stay for one more night.



Pittwater to Port Stephens

3rd June 2024. Fortunately wind was light this morning, but we still didn't get off dock as early as I would have hoped....I wanted help from marina staff, so we had to wait for the marina office to open, and then we had to wait for the staff to wander down. Both these staff' members were experienced so I had no anxiety issues, and after throwing us our lines so we could get off the jetty, they then caught them again when we landed on the fuel jetty (ironically part of the same structure, and had a catamaran not come in behind us yesterday evening, we would have been able to manhandle Sengo into position for fuelling). We were off the fuel dock at 0835 thanks to the 2J's.

We motored up Pittwater...with the wind on our nose ranging from 0 to 10 knots. It was stunningly beautiful outside, but chilly. The wind was blowing 11 knots west as we passed West Head

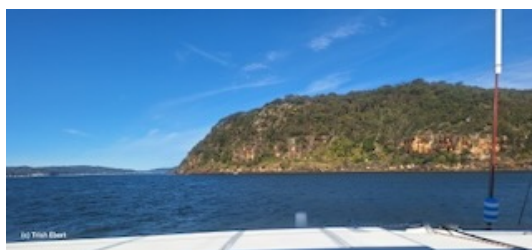
At 1030 a mooring was picked up in Cowan Creek; we had a view to Lion Island from the back door.

We were waiting for the right time to leave. The mooring was dropped at 1540. The main was raised at 1600 and the genoa was out at 1605. We kept the motor on as we headed toward the entrance of Broken Bay, and the engines remained on for a little over an hour after the sails were raised - we turned them off at 1722.

Engines went on again for 30 minutes around 2030. The boat in front of us clearly had an engine on (interpreting their AIS signal on the plotter). Did they know something we didn't? Then Sydney Marine Rescue read out the weather forecast... with a Marine Strong Wind Warning! What! That hadn't been declared last time we looked at the weather forecast. What do we do? Do we turn back?

At this point a boat 3.5 nautical miles behind us logged into Sydney Marine Rescue. We decided to keep going, and we were doing 6 to 7 knots SOG when we turned the engines off.

Having heard the warning we got straight onto the internet. Yup. There it was. And yuk, the new forecast had grumpier looking winds than we were hoping for (and indeed, clearly, expecting). Thinking positively we hoped MetEye was vaguely correct...the strong winds would be out to sea...and this time (unlike our trip from Eden to Pittwater) we weren't



going to be chasing them.

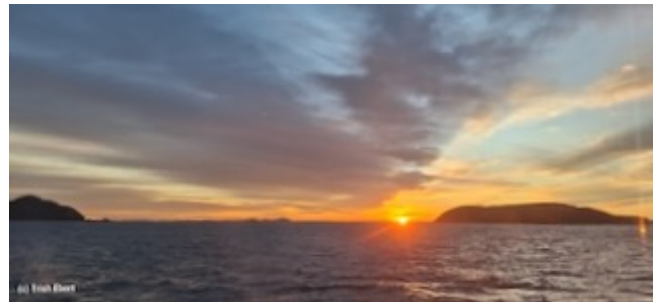
Whilst the winds were behind us, and therefore the wind over the deck was reduced, we still dropped the sails when True wind speeds were edging high 20s to mid 30s. This was way too high for comfort. And dropping the sails off Newcastle at 0100 wasn't comfortable either. From there, sadly, we motored. It wasn't all that comfortable, as the seas, by this time, were quite high.



But at least we got to our destination safely. A mooring was picked up in Shoal Bay, Port Stephens at 0740.

Dolphins, sea eagles and gannets welcomed us into Port. We didn't stay up to see what else would delight us - we went to bed at 0830.

We were up again at 1200, and after easing himself back into 'work on boat' mode, Andrew started investigating an engine issue we were having. This time it wasn't clear if it was a coolant issue, a water issue, or an impeller issue. We replaced the impeller and used a vacuum to blow out any residual obstructions. Eventually the engine worked - just on dusk which was a relief, he would not have been happy working in the dark. There was, of course, a bit of swearing during this afternoon's exercise - he is not good on minimal sleep.



Into a pen

5th June 2024. There was practically no wind this morning. A pod of dolphins made their way past and headed in the direction of the open sea. We weren't really awake yesterday but realised this morning that one of the boats behind us was a boat we knew. But here was no time for socialising - we were going into a marina, five days earlier than our original booking! (Although J & T did come across for a quick chat before they headed to shore).

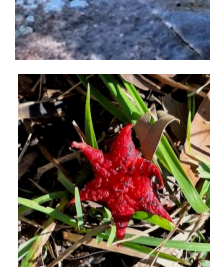
We motored across to the marina and were overtaken by a powerboat on the way. What's the bet, I said to Andrew, that he is going into the marina as well. He was. And we had to wait for him to be tied up before we got any staff assistance. We did back in with a starboard side tie up (in 3 knots True wind speed) but we were moved to the other side of the pen to take into account the prevailing wind.

Pelicans flew past once we had docked. A great sight! Skies were greying. It rained later in the evening.



6th June 2024. The morning presented us with blue skies. Swallows tittered on the lifelines. Given we hadn't had a good walk for a while we headed out on foot to walk the Stony Ridge Conservation Area. We cut the reserve in half and walked back to boat via the main roads. Some of the tracks were muddy, and some led into a new housing development; we took one wrong turn that needed correction. Kookaburras and cravens were heard. As well as a lot of bush birds. Honeyeater silhouettes were spotted flying across the path; species unidentifiable.

I had the courtesy car booked for 1430. The courtesy car is a Lexus. For me it is huge, and I felt so small inside it; I made sure that I parked it clear of other cars in the supermarket car park. When I got back to boat the skies were leaden and we did get rain - fortunately the amounts were minimal compared with locations further south



7th June 2024. At 0715, as I got off boat this morning on the way to the ablution block, a dolphin frolicked in the marina arm behind us. It was the delight of the day. For the rest of the day we sorted out paperwork for our upcoming trip, and for all the administration activities that were overdue or nearly due; insurance, registrations etc. There was a lot of it!

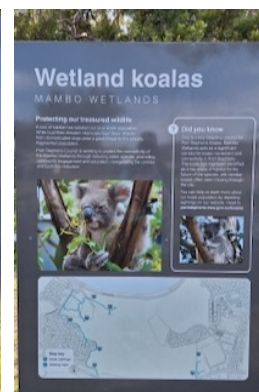
8th June 2024. We did nothing but read today. It was windy and we saw a little over 22 knots on the gauges; we suspect some wind gusts were considerably higher. Most boats in the marina pens were rocking up and down, and the dock was wobbling enough to make one sea sick.

Mambo Wetlands

9th June 2024. The wind had dropped off a bit this morning and we again stepped out to stretch our legs. My aim was the Mambo Wetlands. I was using someone's previous wander on Alltrails as a guide, but I suspect that the user that logged the path did so some time ago, and whilst we crossed a couple of clearly used paths, the tracks we took ended up on were overgrown or completely hidden with revegetation. None the less, we persevered, fighting through six foot high sedges and finding ourselves with a 'moat' to cross. Had I been prepared for a little more bush-bashing we could have got out of this mess quite close to this water barrier, but instead we retraced our steps and emerged where we had started. The area is known for koalas; none were spotted.

We walked back via the hamlet of Soldiers Point and had lunch at the cafe next to the independent grocer. In the afternoon, back at the marina, we managed to watch the AFL on the large lounge screen - there was no one to compete with for the space.

Great interps boards - pity the reserve was overgrown!



10th June 2024. It was that cold this morning that even the locals had beanies and hoodies on! The temperature clearly didn't worry one of the the local dolphins who frolicked in the water near boat ramp

It was windy again. We saw 24 plus knots on gauges. We were originally due to come onto dock today... I am very glad we had come in early. We spent the day on a few things; final packing for our overseas trip, and lots of reading. Andrew fixed the furler, and tied the mainsheet to the back of the boom. We also packed up the last of the cleaned, and dried, spinnaker lines, and brought the blocks in. We finished the day watching two hours of mind-numbing television.

11th June 2024. We borrowed the courtesy car again. We had run ourselves out of fresh food a bit too early and needed supplies for the next couple of days. I also wanted to send my residual soft plastics (the ones that were lost in the bilge) to one of the 12 supermarket locations that were trialling collection again. I bet the environmental officer at the location I sent it to was surprised!

D*, a boat we had chatted to in Lakes Entrance, and seen from a distance near Eden, came to say a quick hello. We also chatted to K, as he came to check on his boat in a nearby pen. K is a solo 'round the world yacht race' entrant. I am so in awe.

Other activities included securing more lines to the dock, and chasing options for penning for the xmas period; we will not be sailing down to Melbourne this year!

We have been trying to ignore our imperative maintenance issues; the internal bilge issue we will sort out when we get back from being overseas. However, whilst we were having dinner another issue arose: the attenuator to our water pump decided it had had enough of life. Great! Add it to the list!



12th June 2024. The marina offers a lift to the local airport if staff are available. Unfortunately the time we wanted to travel tomorrow clashed with a couple of meetings, and the staff is small. So, to work around this, we adjusted our car hire (we are driving from Port Stephens to Sydney International Airport tomorrow), and picked up the hire vehicle a day early. This enabled less stressful final arrangements, and, unexpectantly, a visit to a museum.



Fighterworld is exactly what it sounds like, a museum of old and classic fighting aeroplanes, and has an interesting array of various machines and memorabilia. We had a chat to one old pilot as we entered, but the two ex pilots (and then administrators) in the second shed was where Andrew had the most fun. The volunteers were a wealth of information, naturally, and were so impressed that Andrew knew about lots of obscure history and events. In the end, I think he wore them out!

The unexpected visit to the museum had adjusted our day and we got back to boat mid afternoon for a late lunch. As per forecast, it was very windy; we saw 34 knots on the gauges.

The evening was spent dotting the 'l's' and crossing the 't's' of our luggage. Tomorrow we were off!

Aboard Sengo - August 2024

Aboard Sengo August is as boring as Aboard Sengo June, except the essence changes a bit; instead of travelling from A to B and getting into a pen as we did in June, in August we were getting ready to leave dock.

I spent the first three days after getting back to Sengo recovering from Jet-lag - that is, I slept most of the time. I spent the next four days after that cleaning up and airing out items relating to the mess we had discovered in the bilge in C3. We were expecting the boat to smell a bit musty when we returned, but not as bad as it did in that area. The job involved pulling everything out from the front port pointy section of the boat, as well as the relevant section of the bilge because we discovered water had come through the front hatch. Not another one - we thought. As it was the whole issue was due to human error. The vent had been open on the hatch - which is okay for light rain. But not okay for the drenching Sengo had had whilst we were away. Also not okay for the amount of water we had had over Sengo's decks on the way north - specifically the run across Bass Strait into Lakes Entrance a few months ago. So, whilst this job took a long time to sort out, at least we know what the problem was and why our bilge pump was going off mid-journey!

Once the clean-up job was done, it was just a matter of getting ready to leave - but then we discovered it.

Sengo had received overspray paint from work on an adjacent boat whilst we were away. When discovered (we didn't notice it for a few days) we complained to the marina manager, who contacted the owner of the boat, who contacted his painter. Eventually the perpetrator turned up and tried to fix it with metho. It didn't work and he went back to his paint supplier for advice. At the end of the month we were still waiting for the damage to be fixed.

During this time, knowing that once we get off dock that we might be stuck on boat for a while, I managed to drag Andrew out for a walk as often as I could.

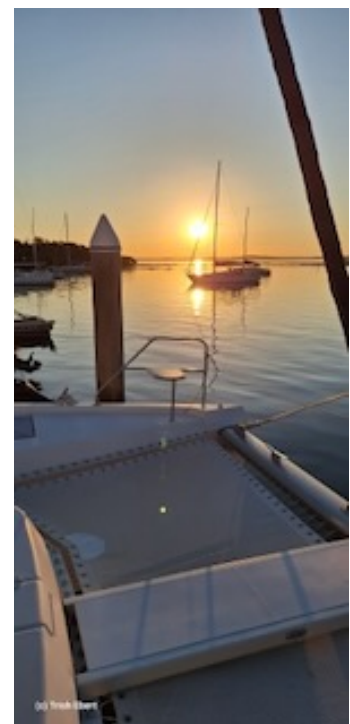
Back on board.

24th August 2024. Morning. When I got up rosella's were squawking, a large bird was taking off the water somewhere (I could hear its flapping wings), and a craven was providing a backgrounding noise with a mournful long call. There were also swallows twittering close by, the sound of someone launching his fishing boat, and the occasional call of a pied oyster catcher. A short patch of rain had recently fallen.

The rain didn't last long but more (a lighter run according to the rain radar) was on its way. I took advantage of the gap to set the hose up. The parts for the water pump were dutifully sitting on the bench when we arrived home. They had actually arrived on the 13th before we left - that was delivery in less than 24 hours after ordering them and I was impressed. Yesterday however Andrew was in no condition to do any boat jobs - he had only managed to stay awake three hours before he crashed. I managed 4.5 hours but then we both slept until 0600 this morning.

Most of the day was spent fumbling about. I had gone for a food shop yesterday before crashing so there was no need to do anything but try to recover from jet-lag.

At 1900 I heard a dolphin outside. We had heard the kookaburras at dusk, as we had last night. And shortly after a disturbance on dock... a night heron perhaps?

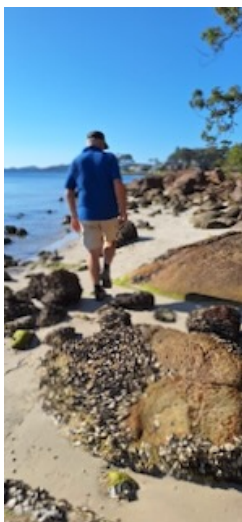


25th August 2024. When I walked off of boat just after 0700 this morning, it was overcast grey and the water was glass. 'Parrotoids' (assume rainbow lorikeets) could be heard, and a couple of pelicans moved around the marina, as did a couple of swallows. I was coming back from a lovely shower when it started to drizzle!

I didn't last long. I read a bit but I slept most of the day.

26th August 2024. I dragged Andrew out for a morning walk - ending up at the Soldiers Point shops (via the beach), where we stopped for a cuppa. Back at boat I attacked the musty boots in C2 head and clove oiled C1 head. I also discovered a leak under the camping box. Great! Where did that come from - the salt from the evaporated water had encrusted just under the drain hole. The whole front port section of the boat smelt musty. Something else to deal with!

We discovered paint overspray on the boat - and queried whether the boat next door had been painted on whilst we were away. I spent the afternoon sleeping.



27th August 2024. By the time the sun was popping up over the horizon I had bread in the oven, done some reading, done some tidying up, and listened to oystercatchers, kookaburras, lorikeets and a fisherman heading out before dawn. I'd also seen a pied cormorant as I was outside opening up the front

I had got up before 0500 but I had managed an afternoon snooze yesterday so figured the 5 hours I had slept wasn't too bad. I spent the day starting to decant wet and musty stuff out of the front port locker.

28th August 2024. It was blowing around 20 knots gusting up to 32 before we left at 1300 to do a shop. When we got back at 1410 it was blowing low 30s more or less constantly. Andrew checked coastal observations...Port Kembla had gusted in the time we were out to 61 knots!

In the morning I continued reading the book I had bought on Italy. The rest of the day (clearly excluding the time shopping) was spent continuing on pulling stuff out of the front locker.

I managed one load of washing and drying and we had blinis for lunch

I had got up just before 0600 - hopefully that is a sign I am getting better....

29th August 2024....but maybe not. This morning I woke up at 0300. I had gone to bed around 2030 so I had managed a longer day. I didn't think that was too bad. Rather than try to get more sleep, which I suspected I wouldn't, I started editing the trip notes. After getting bored of this I read a bit more Italian history, and then, as it got light, set up the hose so we could check the leak of the front port bow.

When Andrew got up at 0730 I harangued him, before he got distracted, into the front port bow, and I went outside and turned the hose on. We didn't find any leaks through the fittings fortunately (I was worried that there may have been issues with the new bolts for the rigging), and the hatch seals as such weren't leaking but... it seems the vent was open in the middle of the hatch. It is enough to keep the rain from above out but not a deluge that swamps the vent from underneath. Not only had Sengo copped all of weather whilst we were away, she had also copped some drenching seas on our way north from Victoria and Tasmania (crossing Bass Strait in April certainly gave her a salty bath). So the musty smelly items in the bow have been festering for up to four months...no wonder there is unwanted nasally offensive growth throughout the affected area. Although it is a big relief that we don't have a major issue, I have just spent three days cleaning out contaminated storage areas that didn't have to happen. I am not necessarily all that happy about that. The mattress was aired on the tramp in the sun all day and it came inside with no smell. All our luggage bags were however still musty when the sun went down. I washed the throw rug that had been under all things in the top layer...that would hopefully dry overnight.

Andrew charged the starter batteries and checked that the engines were running.

30th August 2024. The only activity of note today was a walk around what now has become a habitual circuit - towards the boat ramp, up the road, detour via the beach, around Wanda Point and then back via the Soldiers Point shops and the main road.



31st August 2024. I got the lounge back today, and most of the front cockpit, and our couch downstairs.... Gee, it's a good feeling to put everything away where it should be - and actually see the furniture!

I had got up at 0530. Apart from putting stuff away, I continued reading about the creation of 'Italy' and continued on my Europe notes.

We also managed to book our accommodation for a few days over Christmas.

It was a very windy day. It was also the opening of the sailing season by the local yacht club. There was going to be the official opening, and apparently a couple of stalls outside the yacht club premises. Of course scheduled also was the 'sail by,' to welcome in the season. A lot of boats dressed up. Not many did the sail by - it was just too windy.

The painter turned up today to see the mess he had caused. He came with metho - thinking that, as it was a water based paint, he could remove it with the chemical. It didn't work.

