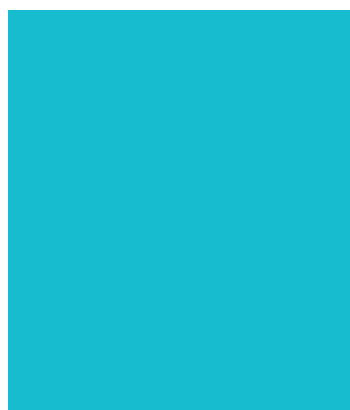


Aboard Sengo



Stuck in Port Stephens!

Waiting for the right winds to head north



In some ways September was, in the broadest sense, a lost leader for us; we didn't move. Well, that's not quite true - we explored a little bit of Port Stephens, but we weren't heading north to Queensland (for our yearly maintenance) as we had planned to. We had paid for pen storage up until the 5th September, and whilst we technically didn't have to stay on dock if the weather was good to get off, we now had the overspray from the adjacent boat to deal with - we really didn't want to leave until that had been fixed by the perpetrator. In hindsight we should have left, as the fix turned out to cause more damage than the original issue.

On the morning of the 5th September we left dock around 0900 and headed across to pick up a mooring at Fame Cove. We spent some time in Fame Cove, sheltering from some very grumpy weather coming up the coast (too grumpy to take north). We eventually decided we had probably overstayed our welcome a bit and we headed off to find different scenery, heading into Tilligerry Creek and anchoring opposite the Oyster Sheds on the west side of the hamlet of Lemon Tree Passage.

Excursions this month included exploring a couple of local creeks - until the tinnie could travel no further, and visiting Lemon Tree Passage, and Soldiers Point again, to stretch the legs. Our welcome at the township of Karuah, however, was not pleasant.

The quality of September's scribble is mixed. Some of it was written well after the fact and details noticed during the day were not recorded. And there were some days where it was just too windy, or wet, to get off to explore. On these days I didn't necessarily make any diary notes - except that it was wet and windy. Photos taken from vessels (big and small) may not be in focus.



1st September 2024



1st September 2024

Still on dock: Soldiers Point Marina

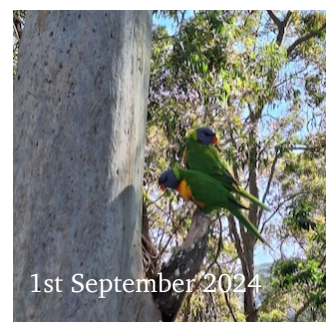
1st - 4th September 2024.

The first few days of September were spent filling-in time. We waited to the extent of our paid time on dock so that the perpetrator of the overspray could remove it from Sengo's hull and covers. Unfortunately, he turned up with a product he hadn't used before and proceeded to follow only half of the SOP. The result was that we ended up with more damage than when we started! Clearly we were not happy, (read: highly stressed), about this.

A day after the perpetrator had yelled at us that 'he had done all he could,' which of course was rubbish, as we were pointing out bits he'd missed (at this point I hadn't realised what damage he was doing to our covers (and I didn't find the damage to our windows until we were off dock)), I washed the top sides of the deck. I didn't get around to washing the sides of the boat - that would have to wait until we were on the hard at The Boat Works - the date of which was a moving feast because 'Huey the Weather God' didn't look like he was giving us a window to travel north any time soon.



2nd September 2024



1st September 2024



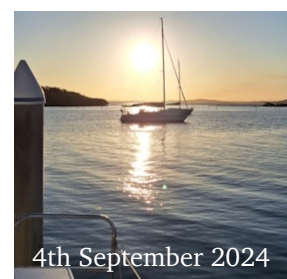
2nd September 2024



2nd September 2024



4th September 2024



4th September 2024



4th September 2024

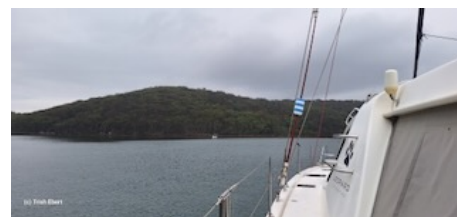
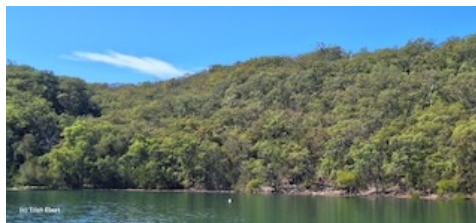
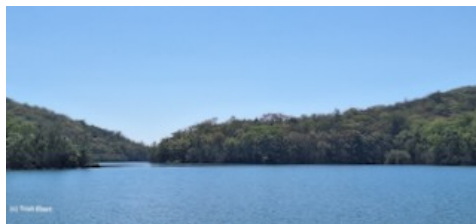
Fame Cove

5th - 17th September 2024

5th September 2024. We departed Soldiers Point Marina with the help of the marina manager shortly after 0900. We picked up a mooring in Fame Cove not long afterward, and the two boats that were occupying moorings as we entered the Cove, left. Was it something we said? For a little while we had the cove to ourselves and it was lovely to be on our own, with the only noise being the bush birds calling from shore.

Over the next twelve days our activities were mixed. On windy and/or rainy days we stayed on board. On days with better weather we went exploring - either to localities that we were familiar with, or to places anew.

6th and 7th September 2024. Windy. Rainy. We stayed on boat. Sea eagles, yellow-tailed black cockatoos, and bush birds.



Karuah - A new town - a rude welcome.

8th September 2024. The morning wind was 'lightish.' The afternoon wind was expected to be less so. I proposed an excursion thinking I was suggesting a short run, but the destination was further away than I first thought. The important thing was that it wasn't raining. The temptation of having lunch at the Karuah township meant Andrew wasn't perturbed by a bit of extra distance. Looking at satellite photos we determined that there was an older style jetty just to the Port side of the bridge. This was our destination. I had seen a small boat ramp just on the other side of the bridge but there didn't seem to be any beach next to it, and we didn't have our wheels on; so the jetty was the designated tie up place.

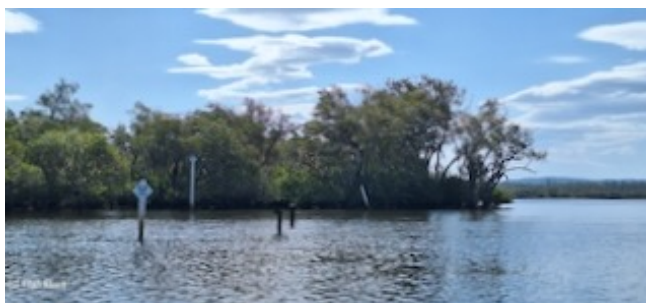
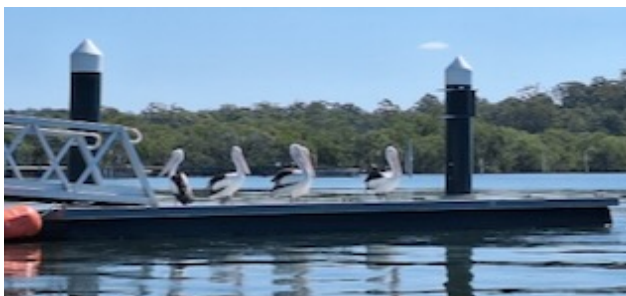
As we approached the jetty we noted that it was occupied by quite a few fishers. The fixed jetty had one lot of steps heading into the water and there was one young fisher on the level just above the tide



line. As we approached, as he had taken no action (an adult would have wound-in his line), I kindly asked if he would wind his line in so we could get off. Then we would move the boat and he could have the spot back. What I didn't immediately realise was that this individual had an intellectual disability, because the next thing that happened was that I got abused by a woman, who I assume is his mother, from a couple of steps above on the top level of the jetty. 'Stop picking on the children,' she yelled aggressively. What! I wasn't picking on anyone, I calmly said, I just asked if we could borrow the step for a couple of minutes so we wouldn't get our feet wet. 'Why don't you use the boat ramp like everyone else,' she yelled. What boat ramp, I thought, given my earlier observations and given the fact we had no wheels on, the known boat ramp wouldn't have been suitable. This was all quite confronting and I was quite angry - but I didn't know how to respond without calling the woman an idiot - which benefits no one. In the end the child did move. I got out with dry feet. Andrew got out and got his feet and shins wet as we manoeuvred the tinnie along the jetty and out of the way.

By this time I had worked out the lad probably didn't quite have the mental capacity of his bodily age, but none the less I quietly thanked him. I was not going to stoop to the behaviour of his 'parent/guardian' and start yelling. Perhaps he will realise that not all people are yelling tyrants. It wasn't the most desirable welcome to a new hamlet, and it put a dampener on our visit.

The priority, once we had tied up, was lunch, and once we had got to the main road we wandered west looking for somewhere suitable. We had used Google Maps to see what was listed in 'town' but Google isn't always reliable; although Andrew did take notice of, and wasn't all that impressed by, the reviews of the RSL. One place listed as a 'Thai and other' seemed to have lost the reference to 'Thai' on the outside of the shop, and now only referred to 'fish and chips.' One 'pizza and steak' place was closed, and we ended up at the other 'pizzeria,' where the lass behind the counter



asked how our day had been. 'Whell,' I started to explain, and after having a whinge, I said I hoped the locals weren't like this (the jetty where we had tied up was near the caravan park so I am assuming the abuser was a visitor). The lass was apologetic and said no, the locals are much nicer - then she qualified - 'at least most of them!' We had a great burger for lunch (my burger



without the bun was probably the biggest I've had - it was presented beautifully - filling the available space in a bowl), and we headed back to the tinnie after eating - the earlier welcome had completely dissuaded us from wandering around the streets of town to explore.

Our tinnie was still tied up to where we had left it, fortunately, and the pontoons were still inflated - with the attitude of the aggressive woman I wouldn't have been surprised if she was the vindictive type, and I wouldn't have put it past her to puncture them. The lad was gone. The woman was on her chair fishing and we ignored her. Andrew got his feet and shins wet again retrieving the boat, and we headed off.

But instead of immediately heading back to boat, we headed up river.

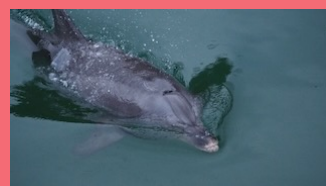
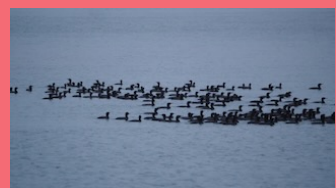
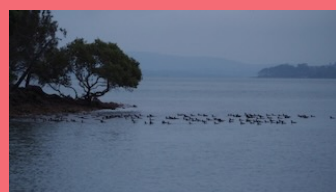
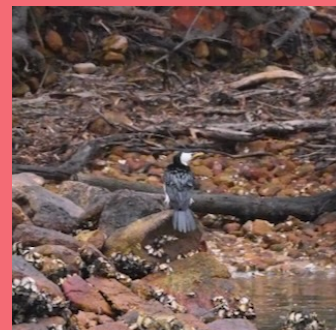
It seems there is indeed a more substantial boat ramp further up river - and not far past where I had looked at the satellite photo. And it seems to have a nice new set of floating jetties around it so I guess that is what the woman was talking about. However, it was still of no use to us.

The issue: tie up time is, according to big, shiny, signs, for 15 minutes. You can't do anything in 15 minutes. What's the point? Yes, okay, if you are picking up guests, or sorting out the boat you are launching or retrieving, it might be enough time, but if you are a visitor to the area 15 minutes is useless.

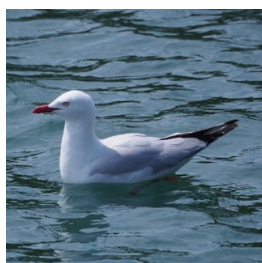
We continued further up river to have a look, noting the changing vegetation, birdlife and land use. In the end we turned around sooner than we would normally have (we had plenty of time before sundown), as we knew the winds outside the river were due to get stronger. And indeed they had whilst we had been exploring. We made our way home over rough seas, and we were both quite wet with salty water once we got back to Sengo.

We didn't look too closely but as we headed past the fixed jetty on our way home we saw what we thought was a public mooring. If that is the case then it would be possible to bring Sengo closer to town if need be (if we didn't want to anchor). However, unless we were desperate for food and needed to access the independent grocer in town, I doubt we will be back.

Back at boat!



9th September 2024. On boat.
Windy



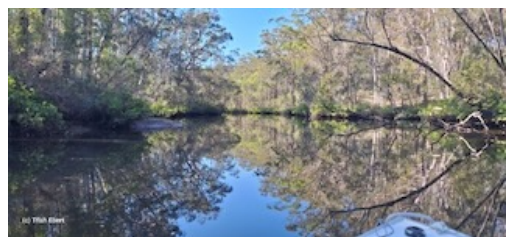
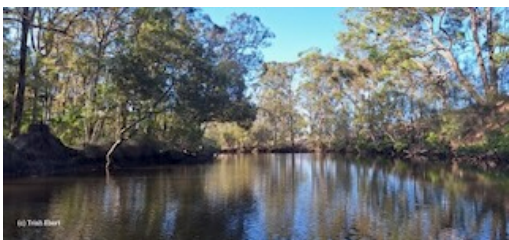
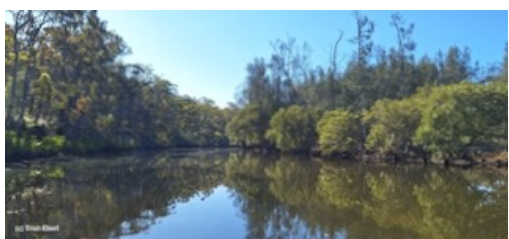
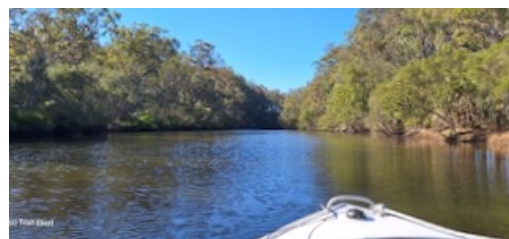
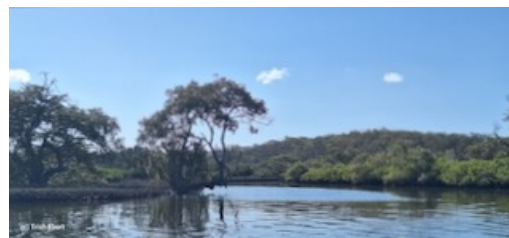
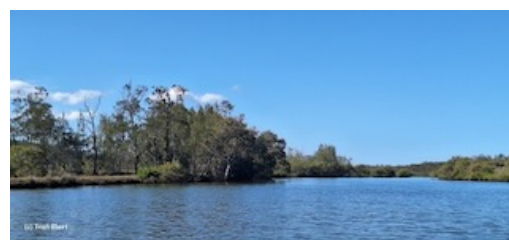
Bundobah Creek

10th September 2024.

The morning winds were calm but the temperature was slightly chilly, so we thought we would wait a couple of hours before heading out for a bit of an explore. In the end our journey didn't start until after lunch.

Today's excursion wasn't meant to be as far as that of two days ago - the aim was just to have a bit of a look at the bay next door; so after leaving Sengo we gently meandered around the shoreline to our west, turning up into North Arm Bay and admiring the birdlife that came our way; darters drying their wings on rocks and logs, pied cormorants, terns and gulls flying above, and a sea eagle that landed not far from us. This bay has a couple of hamlets along its shores, and quite a few permanent moorings in its waters, most of which were occupied. It also has quite a few shellfish farms to negotiate, particularly at the top end, which was where we decided, after a few minutes, to concentrate our early exploration. The theory was that we would access and explore the Creek a bit, and then come back and check out the shoreline of the bay on the way back to boat.

In the end it was the Creek that took up the rest of our afternoon. Access to the Creek is down a fairway between oyster farms, and the current zig-zag of markers doesn't quite reflect our Navionics chart (but as our program needs updating we thought it more prudent to follow the actual physical marks). Past the marks you enter a Sanctuary Zone where no fishing is allowed, but we were not quite sure of the extent of this. Mangroves line the river on both sides for quite some way (way off our chart - we were travelling along yellow on the screen for a significant portion of our trip). Fortunately we had internet reception and Google Maps was working - the satellite function showed us exactly where we were - and gave us a hint as to which way to go when we came to a split in the waterway. Once we had passed the Great Aussie Bush Camp (the vegetation had changed to bush and tall trees this far up) we thought that we would continue through to the bridge at the Princes Highway before turning around. In reality we didn't quite get that far. Not far from the bush camp (where I note several gentlemen were 'swinging around in the trees'), we suddenly found we had large rocks only a few centimetres under the hull.... It was time to turn around.

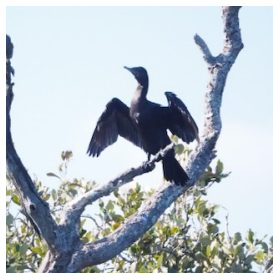
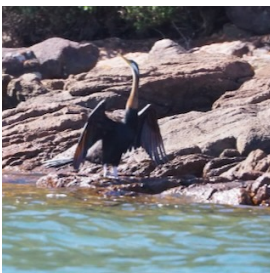
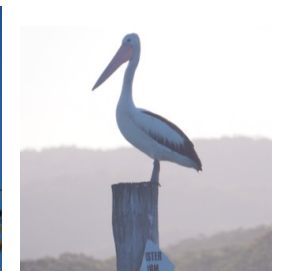
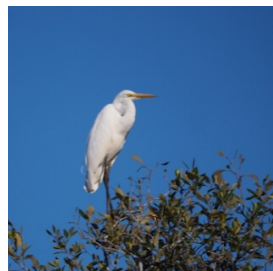
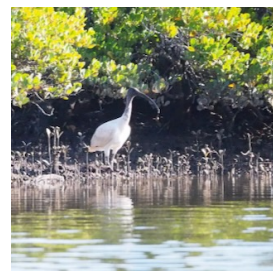
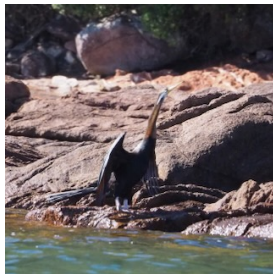
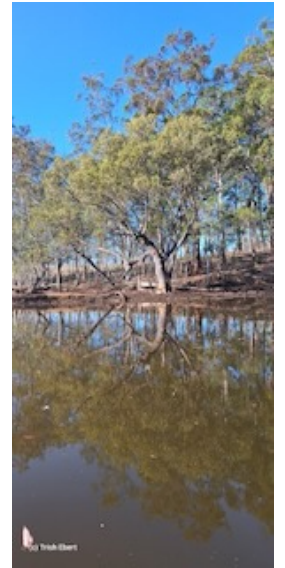


Of course the wind had picked up when we made our way back out to, and back into, the bay. Fortunately it was nowhere near as bad as it had been two days ago, and we got back to Sengo relatively dry.

Bundobah Creek was lined with a mixture of vegetation; mangroves, bush, and paddocks.

Bird list: great egret, white faced heron, noisy friarbird, craven, willy wagtail, tern (sp?), pacific gull, white bellied sea eagle, darter, white ibis, woodswallow

Animals: goats.

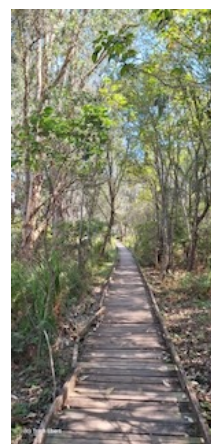


Lemon Tree Passage

11th September 2024. Given that the forecast for today looked good, and the forecast for the next few days looked anything but, I suggested to Andrew that perhaps we head across to Lemon Tree Passage for a walk. Well, actually, I bribed him. If I could get us on a very easy stroll (approx. 5 kilometres) around the shoreline, we could do lunch ashore. It wasn't a hard sell, and around 1010 we headed off. Around half an hour later we were tied up on what we assume was a public jetty (floating - and on one side of a boat ramp next to the marine rescue boat). The sun was out. The winds were light. It was a beautiful day.



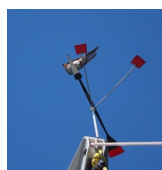
I can't remember if we've done this walk before - but it is possible. Part of it is labelled the Koala Walk and Andrew kept a vague eye out for any grey lumps in the trees. Had we doubled our distance we would have ended up in the Koala Sanctuary in Tanilba Bay but I couldn't remember if there is a cafe there, and shocking Andrew into a walk twice the expected length at short notice is never welcome. So we turned around at the Holiday Park (where there is a big 'Private Property, Keep Out' sign) and returned to the hamlet of Lemon Tree Passage.



The choice of eating establishments varies here and initially I thought we had the choice of Poyers (fancy - we weren't dressed for it and I wasn't wanting to spend that much money), and a 'greasy joes,' that had steaks (\$39.00 which was also a bit over my intended budget), as well as the cheaper stuff which seemed to have unavoidable bread or wheat in it. They did have a chicken burger - which invariably means (although I admit not always) a crumbed fillet, so no good for me. My fall back is always a beef burger without the bun - but they weren't offering a beef burger. If you have a quick look at Google Maps the only other obvious location that comes up is a slightly smaller establishment which, when we had a look, looks like a 'coffee, cold drinks and sandwiches' spot; nothing substantial was on their menu. In between these establishments however we found an establishment that was somewhat of a surprise.

The business is listed on 'Google' as a 'homewares store' with a cafe. A 'sandwich' board was out on the street with the words 'Cafe Open', but my assumption of the place, particularly looking at the listed offerings painted on the outside wall, was that this would be a 'coffee and cake' sort-of destination. I wasn't expecting anything else. Boy, was I surprised! Sticking our nose into this homely little spot I spied the upright display fridge. And the first things I saw in it were three different types of salad. This will do me. Andrew found something equally as interesting for lunch, and as the apple pie was 'gluten free,' we indulged in a desert as well.

Getting back to boat was over slightly rougher water than when we had started our excursion, and Andrew, for once, got wetter than me; waves had splashed over from the easterly side swell.



Bird list: kookaburras (inspecting holes in the trees), canoodling corellas at their chosen nest site, noisy miners, willy wagtail, Brahminy kite, pacific gull, pied cormorant, kingfisher, craven, pelican, black swan, tern with yellow legs and yellow bill, wattle birds



Also noted today: one very anxious dachshund.

Hopping Across

12th September 2024. I was up around 0730. It had been raining since 0245. And initially it seemed that no bush birds were calling this morning. I assumed they were hunkering in the rain, but once I had opened the back up I found the rain had lightened off and there was a delightful cacophony of song from shore. The calls included the lone male whipbird - who still hasn't got a female to respond to his invitation .



We moved moorings when the 'flat cat' left - I was hoping to get slightly better Internet as the slowness and clunkiness of our reception at this second Fame Cove mooring was becoming not only frustrating, but in my 'not quite awake and haven't had breakfast' mind it was becoming destructive as well. With all the files stuck in the outbox for the photos overnight - some had settled themselves in as drafts as well - I am used to this. Once the outbox clears -some images still get caught in drafts. I have just been deleting these. Except that this morning, in my rush, I think I have deleted all of September's diary notes as well. I will make an attempt at retyping these, although nuances noted on each day will be, of course, lost forever.

We put the tinnie's soft seats away this morning - they are not going to be used for the next few days - in fact, I am not sure when the tinnie is going to be of use again, practical or recreational; the forecast for the next few days is not good - from both a rain, and a wind, perspective.

By lunch time the cat bird had called, as had the Wonga pigeon, the single eastern whipbird was still lonely, and the sea eagle had landed just behind us. We had also had a couple of bouts of medium to heavy, but short in duration, rain

Lunch was the left over pumpkin soup from the other night, with rice pasta, and peas.



13th September 2024. It was a grey day and it rained quite a bit. Between showers a sea eagle showed itself a couple of times during the day. Andrew spent the day reading. I spent the day, between reading, continuing the Europe writeup, and scrubbing the 'black snow' off the deck with a toothbrush - not a quick, but ultimately will be a satisfying, job.

A mono came in near sundown. Three of the moorings are now occupied - two cats, one mono.

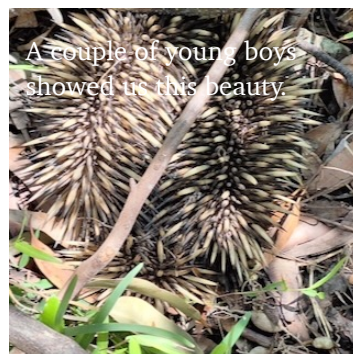


Walk to Soldiers Point

14th September 2024. We got up around 0800. Yellow-tailed black cockatoos and a wonga pigeon were calling. As well as the morning chorus of bush birds.

At 1015 we took the tinnie across to the Soldiers Point boat ramp and tied it up on the outside of the jetty, out of the way of launching boats. Following the route we had traversed before, we walked down to the Soldiers Point shops via the beach, including the extension around Wanda Point. It is a lovely walk when the sun is out. We took the opportunity to restock some basic food stuffs at the independent grocer before heading back. We had discussed the possibility of lunch at the cafe, but ended up with a late lunch of pasta and leftovers back on boat instead. We were back on boat at 1400.

Aside from the excursion I spent most of the day working on the Europe diary notes. There was also some recreational reading, and toothbrush deck scrubbing as well.

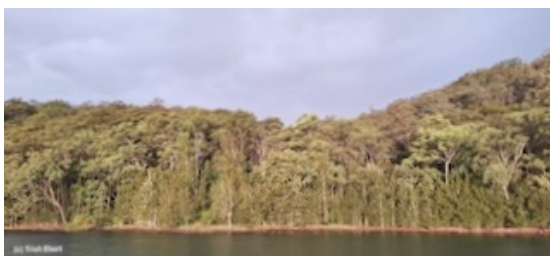
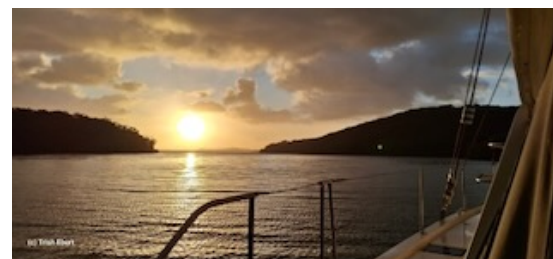


A couple of young boys showed us this beauty.



15th September 2024. Skies were grey and it rained all day. Sea eagles and yellow tailed black cockatoos were the dominant birds calling. We had a dolphin visit in the afternoon. I spent the day on Europe diary notes and photos 'stuff.'

16th September 2024. In contrast to yesterday there was not a cloud in the sky. But we spent the day on boat - reading mainly - and I continued sorting photos for the photo frame. A bit of spring cleaning was also undertaken. Given some strange 'pht' noises, a dolphin may have visited after dark.



Tilligerry Creek

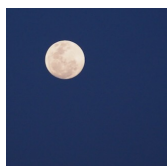
Changing neighbours.

17th September 2024. I got up at 0845. It had rained overnight. The catamaran that had been our neighbour was leaving - another one was already on the third south mooring. A craven called and, as usual, the call of bush-birds was noticeable from the trees.

We dropped the mooring around 1010. It hadn't been straight forward. With all the turning over the past couple of days, the three mooring lines we had attached had twisted around each other in ways I wouldn't have thought possible. Eventually we were free.

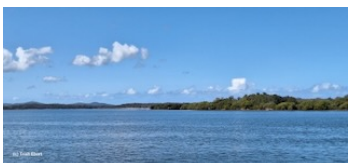
The anchor was down, with no issues, at around 1115 in Tilligerry Creek, opposite the oyster farm sheds. We had initially tried to get to this spot via a direct route but found a shallowing depth on a dropping tide not quite to our liking. Back-tracking and passing between the shore and the oyster bank adjacent the mud bank in slightly deeper, if not narrower waters because of moored boats, did not take too much longer.

Ironically we are anchored off where we got to on our walk last week!



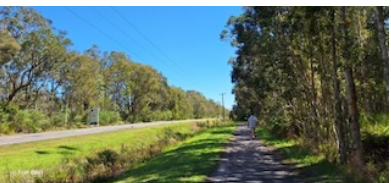
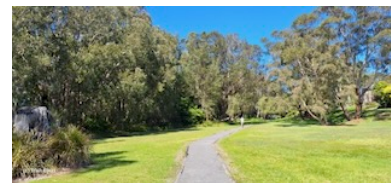
Birds: a yellow-tailed black cockatoo flew past a full-ish moon. Mopokes were heard in the dark. Kookaburras were heard at dusk.

There had been few clouds all day. And very little wind. I occupied the afternoon sorting photos from the Europe trip.



A walk - Lemon Tree Passage to Tanilba Bay

18th September 2024. The day was predicted to be nice enough for another walk. To save us landing on the beach and changing into our boots (which we could have done a lot closer) we took the tinnie around to the jetty with the marine rescue boat. And half repeated our wander of several days ago. This time however, instead of turning around once we got into the vicinity of the holiday park, we turned to the right and walked through to the main road, before turning left toward the hamlet of Tanilba Bay. There had been a reason for walking this far; to stock up on a few food items at the Tanilba Bay Coles. Of course by this time it was after 1200 and we were hungry. The options for buying lunch near Coles were, however, not inspiring. In the end we back tracked a few hundred meters and had lunch at the RSL Sports Club (the food wasn't brilliant), taking advantage of their courtesy bus (which now costs \$2 each) to get back to the tinnie.



There were lots of birds seen and heard on the walk (including hearing one whipbird who did have a female respond), but no kingfishers were spotted. We didn't spot any koalas either. The animals of note were a couple of (dumped, domestic) rabbits.

The afternoon was spent reading and playing with photos.



19th September 2024. Weather predictions indicated it was supposed to be blowing 15 to 20 knots when I got up (late at 0930 - Andrew had been up for some time). But it wasn't and it was calm enough for me to suggest an 'explore'. However the tranquility didn't last long and soon the wind picked up. MetEye didn't change but we saw 30 knots on the gauges. We weren't getting off boat today. MetEye also temporarily offered a forecast to get to the Gold Coast in a couple of days; and then it changed! Activities consisted of reading, some metal polishing, other general cleaning and tidy-up, and playing with photos.

Birds: whmbrel/eastern curlew on far shore (too far away even for binoculars to identify), pelicans, white ibis, swallows, sea eagle

20th and 21st September 2024. On boat. Windy. No excursions.

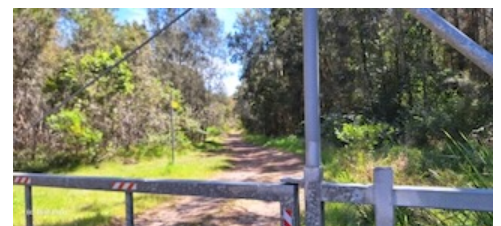
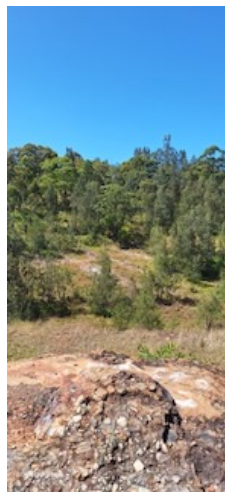
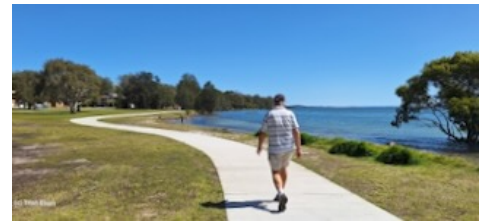
An aborted destination

22nd September 2024. When you hang around an anchorage long enough you run out of things to do and look for new fields to explore. Whilst it wasn't going to be interesting I suggested we take the tinnie across to the public jetty at Taylors Beach, and then walk to the Taylors Beach industrial area (Bunnings, BCF etc). Andrew was wondering why we weren't trying the 'tried and true' Lemon Tree Passage - especially as the wind on the way over to the TB jetty was giving us a bit of jip. However, with the 15 minute only signs on the jetty, including the back of it which was quite short, we decided that prudence was the better part of valour and we abandoned our Taylors Beach experience. Instead we headed, as Andrew had suggested, back to Lemon Tree Passage.

Given the wish for something different, however, instead of heading left when we left the tinnie - we headed right. There is a newish looking path here and it follows the parkland along the shore until it turns up to meet one of the local roads. Andrew and I continued along the parkland past the pathway turnoff and in front of some houses until we came to a small creek. Satellite images indicated that if we could get over the creek we would find ourselves at the end of a dirt road that would lead us toward a bushland reserve area. The terrain however was a bit overgrown and I was worried about twisting an ankle, so we backtracked to the path, followed the road and ending up in the reserve from a different direction.

I am not sure how official the paths are in this reserve - we followed a foot track before it merged into something more substantial. Some of the area looks like what once was a quarry. Somewhere in this mass of bush is a waste transfer station (near the main road and noted to be closed as we passed the gates the other day) and the Newcastle Weather Radar Station. We followed old neglected dirt tracks and finally came to a fire trail. Turning left we came out near a street with industrial type businesses at the back of Lemon Tree Passage.

We got back to boat around lunch time.

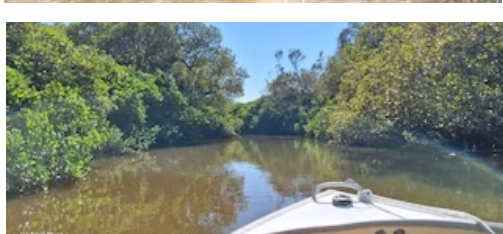
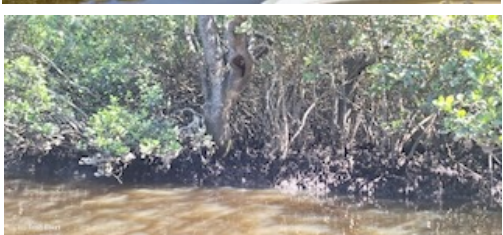
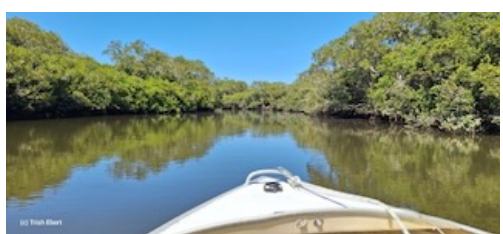


Up Tillegerry Creek

23rd September 2024. And we briefly used the paddles! A channel-billed cuckoo was heard at 0630. There was little wind. And 'little' wind was expected for the entire day. My suggestion for an explore was to head up Tillegerry Creek. Looking at satellite photos it looked like it went a fair way, and a fair way up there was a wildlife park on its banks. That would be a bit of fun, but I suspected we wouldn't get that far, as one road crossing looked suspiciously like a ford. In the end we didn't get very far at all, but that was after we got to where it actually became a creek. The creek around where we were anchored is a wide inlet and that extends someway to the west. Because of the shallow and long nature of this 'inlet,' and the direction of the wind, we were subject to head-on, slightly chilly, wind and slightly more than expected seas; splashes were frequent over the bow of the tinnie. As we made our way toward the last of the oyster farms and closer to the road, conditions settled down. A couple of houses lay between the waterway and the Lemon Tree Passage Road and over a dozen birds stood on the edge of the garden and the shore. About half of these were pelicans. Initially we thought the majority of the rest were egrets but we were delighted to find, upon closer inspection, that they were Royal Spoonbills - in their fancy breeding plumage! Unfortunately I had left the good camera and the zoom lens back at boat - the breeding plumes on the back of the spoonbills' heads looked magic swaying in the breeze.

Passing this patch of civilisation we headed over a bar and up the creek. It wasn't all that deep. And it wasn't all that wide, although it was a lovely paddle for a while at the end of the tide (we had turned the tinnie engine off). Other birds noted up the creek included honeyeaters, a heron who kept just one flight ahead of us, an azure kingfisher, and an osprey who caught a fish in a confined space just in front of us. We could almost have touched it. The depth was still good when we turned around - it was just that the vegetation on the creek's sides emerged into the middle - our path was blocked.

Other birds; little black cormorant, pied cormorant,



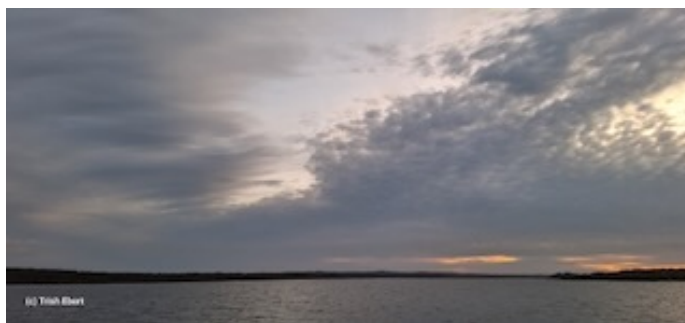
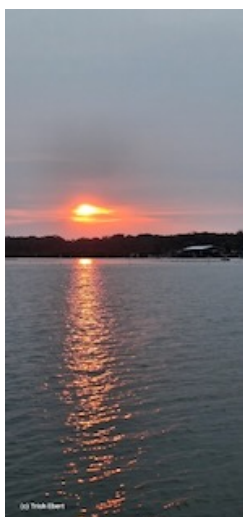
Lemon Tree Passage

24th September 2024. We actually went socialising today. Two days ago we had walked past a house that we thought belonged to ex-cruisers. As we hadn't been there for many years, and had lost touch with them, I was reluctant to knock on the door. However yesterday I sent an email across to the last known email address and asked the question. Yes, it was their house, and did we have time to catch up.

So this morning, after getting to shore at around 0930, dropping off some books to the community outdoor library, placing a couple of spiders that I had found on boat to the base of a shore tree, and going for a short walk, we met L and C for a morning cuppa. As it turned out the timing was fortuitous - this morning was one of only two mornings during the week that they are available. After a cuppa we got dropped off to Coles in Tanilba Bay, did a quick shop and got the bus back to Lemon Tree Passage.

Birds: yellow-tailed black cockatoos, great egret, pelicans, swallows, common myna, silver gull. We also heard koels.

I spent the evening on the write up of my Switzerland diary notes.

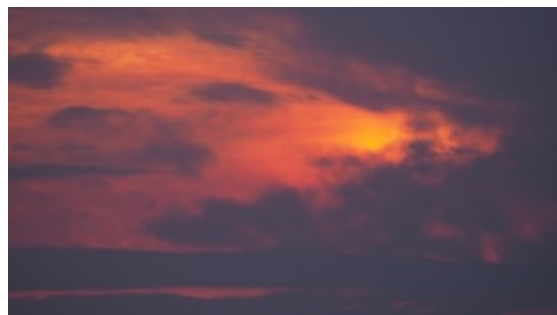


25th September 2024. At 0630 before getting out of bed I could hear a wonga pigeon call, as well as rainbow lorikeets from shore. A work boat went past and destroyed the flat water. Two cormorants flew past. The sky was grey. A channel-billed cuckoo called at 0749. Oyster catchers were calling at 0840 on a fly past, and other shore birds were too far away to identify.



A haze hung over the hills to our west. And an awful smell permeated the boat - from the oyster sheds perhaps?

I got a bit of domestic work done today - cleaning the plastic container 'cupboard' as well as getting a lot of the dust out of the floor rug- this involved hanging it up and 'bashing it'.



Andrew solved the toilet water issue - not much water had been flowing into the bowl - I am sure the mangled jellyfish that came out of the pipe may have had something to do with that. I spent a lot of time on the computer writing-up the Europe trip. For breaks I did some recreational reading.

The day consisted of no wind and grey skies. But it was surprisingly warm. There was a chance of evening showers.

Shorebirds were heard at dusk

26th September. I was awake at 0530. No wind. Strange - forecasts expected today to be really windy. Then there was a horrible noise I didn't want to acknowledge. Unfortunately Andrew confirmed my suspicions- the bilge pump. Maybe we nudged something yesterday when fiddling with the filter?

Then the wind started
Then the rain came down.
Then we got up.

In the end we only saw 26 knots on the gauges but we didn't check every gust - we gave up after a while - we were thinking 'what was the point' - we had plenty of room. And we were holding well.

Bird calls were minimum during the day - but migratory shore birds were heard in the evening.

Photo frames and mangled jellyfish

27th September 2024. It was windy when I got up at 0800 but I could see blue sky out the window - well, a little patch of it. Then it rained and the patch disappeared. The shower however was very short and conditions weren't that bad. Lapwings called and gulls flew around the oyster sheds. Someone with a saw was working on shore.

It took me all day to sort out the electronic photo frame. Having had such a big holiday and taking 'a million photos' (well, no, but it feels that way), I wanted to display them. We have only dealt with the photos from my phone so far, but they numbered into the thousands. To save time I didn't try and choose, I just went through a copy of the photos and resaved them to an sd card in a proportion that would give them the best display on the frame. If I ever get the time to cull them then that is what I will do. In the mean time I had to manage two lots of photos going through my photo editor (which needs auditing (culling)) to get all these photos on the one disk. I was going through 27 gig photos - I had a 64 gig card. Given the file names, they weren't necessarily all going to be in order but at the moment I could live with that, and I took a deep breath when I finished the job.

Except that I hadn't. The photo frame specs claimed it would read a 64 gig card. Except it didn't. Maybe I had one too many folders saved on the disk. I reshuffled and tried again. Nothing. Surely the new photo frame has not broken down. As a check I put the sd card in that had the photos from our Kimberley trip on it. And that worked. Ok. Now I was into problem solving mode. Maybe the card is too big, despite what the specs say. So, I transferred all those files over to a 32 gig card. And walah! However, as it turned out, it wasn't size that was my issue - the 64 gig card just didn't have the software on it so it could be read.....it took me a long time to work it out.

In the mean time Andrew was playing in the bilge. Well, not really. He had played around with the saltwater filter to be able to get the flow of the water into the head back to normal a couple of days ago - the part jellyfish in the system was the blocking culprit. But despite the toilet being back to normal we discovered we still had a leak. So today he tightened the screw around the clamp that holds the hose in place. Now we were back to less water again. This clearly didn't make sense. So he dismantled a bit of the system and cleaned the filter out again. I mean, how much more of that jellyfish is in the system?! By the end of the exercise the tightened clamp wasn't allowing water to drip and the flow of water was, again, back to normal.

Outside during the day there was some rain and some wind. The evening job was sending some base photos to the insurance broker.

28th September 2024. Stayed on boat. No notes taken

29th September 2024. Stayed on boat. A craven heard. Kookaburras heard. There was some rain and in between I did some washing. It was windy.

At 1445 four dolphins started coming our way, arching out of water and clearly having a good time - but they 'went to ground' as an oyster boat headed our way - we didn't see where they reemerged - the oyster boat circled and went back to shore - he could have waited.

Tillegerry Creek to Nelson Bay

30th September 2024. When I woke up at 0500 I realised the wind was up. Quite significantly, and whilst I wasn't worried about our holding I did get up - not to put the gauges on, but to rescue the washing outside. I found it was also drizzling. Despite the hour, after getting the clothing inside the cockpit, I went back to bed. Shortly after this, the drizzle turned into steady, audible, rain. Steady rain, strong wind. I'm not moving in that! But it was only 0500. We had three hours before high tide. Things could change.

I am not sure what time Andrew got up for the day, but it was earlier than me, and I pulled myself out of bed at 0705. The wind had dropped off. The rain was still there and at 0717 lightening was seen out the port window - south - and thunder was heard to our east. According to the graphics on the rain radar - the system was moving through - we might get to move after all.

The anchor was up - out of the lovely, thick, shell-strewn, mud at 0855. The mooring at Nelson Bay was picked up at 1040. We are on a lee shore, something we didn't expect based on forecasts when we left our Tilligerry anchorage, but something we were very aware of coming into Nelson Bay. We picked up the mooring furthest to the east. The mooring furthest to the west was occupied by a mono. The red mooring in between was vacant.

The wind gauge when we started the move had read 0.00. And we weren't moving fast at the time. The wind gauge a little further on, around the corner, was reading 2.2 knots, but from behind, and we were travelling at 7 knots boat speed. When we picked up the mooring the wind was reading 12 knots True - we weren't moving.

I had been hoping for one last walk ashore before we left for our jump north tomorrow. It didn't happen. Instead it was back to doing domestics: including planting some herb seeds, putting the damp washing out the back to dry, reading a bit, constructing the June and August diary notes, and making bread for tomorrow's trip.

