

SeeBeeZee

Sailing Log 2016 Queensland

Over 3000nm from Yamba to Lizard Island and back to Wooli



SeeBeeZee on the Clarence River near Moriarty's Wall at Iluka prior to heading north to Queensland

Contents

12 April - Yamba to Bums Bay.....	5
19 April - Bums Bay to Bedroom.....	6
20 April - Southern Bedroom to Dunwich.....	7
21 April - Dunwich to Days Gutter.....	7
22 April - Days Gutter to St Helena.....	7
26 April - St Helena to Tangalooma.....	8
28 April - Tangalooma to Mooloolaba.....	8
5 May - Mooloolaba to Bullock Point.....	8
6 May - Bullock Point to TeeBar Creek.....	9
7 May - Teebar to Sheridan Flats.....	9
11 May - Sheridan Flats to Scarness.....	10
12 May - Scarness to Burnett Heads.....	10
14 May - Burnett Heads to 1770.....	10
21 May - 1770 to Pancake Creek.....	11
24 May - Pancake Creek to Gladstone.....	11
25 May - Gladstone to Graham Creek.....	11
26 May - Graham Creek to Hobble Gutter.....	11
27 May - Hobble Creek to Pacific Creek.....	12
28 May - Pacific Creek to Great Keppel Island.....	12
2 June - GKI to Port Clinton.....	12
3 June - Port Clinton South Arm.....	13
5 June - Port Clinton to Island Head Creek.....	13
17 June - Island Head Creek to Supply Bay.....	14
18 June - Supply Bay to Hunter Island.....	14
19 June - Hunter Island to Marble Island.....	15
20 June - Marble Island to Digby Island.....	16
21 June - Digby Island to Brampton Island.....	16
22 June - Brampton Island to Goldsmith Island.....	16
23 June - Goldsmith Island Roylen Beach.....	17
25 June - Goldsmith Island to Airlie Beach.....	17
29 June - Airlie to Stonehaven.....	18
30 June - Stonehaven to East Butterfly Bay.....	18
1 July - West Butterfly Bay.....	18
3 July - Butterfly Bay to Langford Island.....	18
4 July - Langford to Gulnare Inlet.....	19
5 July - Gulnare to Chalkies Beach.....	19
6 July - Chalkies to Whitehaven.....	19
12 July - Whitehaven to Windy Bay.....	20
13 July - Windy Bay to Mays Bay.....	20
17 July - Mays Bay to Funnel Bay.....	21
19 July - Funnel Bay to Cannonvale.....	21
26 July - Cannonvale to Cid Harbour.....	21
29 July - Cid Harbour to Airlie Beach.....	21
31 July - Airlie to Woodwark Bay.....	22
1 August - onboard at Woodwark.....	22
2 August - Woodwark to Double Bay.....	22
3 August - Double Bay to Jonah Bay.....	22
6 August - Jonah Bay to Gloucester Passage.....	23
8 August - Gloucester Passage to Cape Upstart.....	23
10 August - Cape Upstart to Horseshoe Bay.....	23
11 August - Moved in Horseshoe Bay.....	24
19 August - Horseshoe to Little Pioneer Bay.....	24
22 August - Little Pioneer to Agnes Island.....	25
23 August - Agnes Island to Zoe Bay.....	26

31 August - Zoe Bay to Dungeness.....	26
1 September - Dungeness to Haycock Island.....	27
2 September - Haycock to Gayundah Creek.....	27
3 September - Gayundah to Unnamed Creek (Raft Creek).....	27
4 September - Raft Creek to Dunk Island.....	28
8 September - Dunk Island to Mourilyan.....	28
10 September - Mourilyan to Innisfail.....	28
15 September - Innisfail to Howie Reef.....	29
16 September - Howie to Flora Reef.....	29
17 September - Flora to Sudbury Cay.....	29
19 September - Sudbury to Moore Reef.....	29
20 September - Moore to Vlasoff Cay.....	30
23 September - Vlasoff to Michaelmas Cay.....	30
25 September - Michaelmas to Vlasoff Cay.....	30
27 September - Vlasoff to Cairns.....	30
28 September - Trinity Inlet to Marlin Marina.....	30
30 September - Marlin Marina to Trinity Inlet.....	30
4 October - Cairns to Pt Douglas.....	30
6 October - Pt Douglas to Low Isles.....	30
9 October - Low Is to Cooktown.....	31
11 October - Cooktown to Cape Bedford.....	31
12 October - Cape Bedford to Cape Flattery.....	31
13 October - Cape Flattery to Lizard Island.....	32
1 November - Lizard Island to Walker Bay.....	32
2 November - Walker Bay to Hope Island.....	32
3 November - Hope Island to Low Islands.....	32
4 November - Low Islands to Cairns.....	33
6 November - Trinity Inlet to Marlin Marina.....	33
8 November - Marlin Marine to Trinity Inlet.....	33
10 November - Cairns to Mourilyan.....	33
11 November - Mourilyan to Little Pioneer Bay.....	34
12 November - Little Pioneer to Cape Bowling Green.....	35
13 November - Cape Bowling Green to Bowen.....	35
14 November - Bowen to Nara Inlet.....	36
18 November - Nara Inlet to Airlie Beach.....	36
20 November - Airlie Beach to Cannonvale.....	37
23 November - Cannonvale to Shaw Island.....	37
24 November - Shaw Island to Goldsmith Island.....	37
1 December - Goldsmith Island to Hunter Island.....	38
2 December - Hunter to Great Keppel Island.....	39
3 December - Great Keppel Island to Pancake Creek.....	40
4 December 2016 - Pancake Creek to Burnett Heads.....	41
5 December - Burnett Heads to Inskip Point.....	41
6 December - Inskip Point to Fraser Island.....	42
7 December - Fraser Island to Mooloolaba.....	42
8 December - Mooloolaba to Peel Island.....	43
9 December - Peel Island to Steiglitz.....	43
10 December - Steiglitz to North Bedroom.....	43
11 December - North Bedroom to Jacobs Well.....	43
12 December - Jacobs Well to Bums Bay.....	44
15 December - Bums Bay to Iluka.....	44
16 December - Iluka to Yamba.....	44
17 December - Yamba to Wooli.....	44

After four months of living on board and visiting home at PV every few days, we were getting close to being ready to head north. We were initially stuck at Wooli, having to go home each day to look after the chooks. After building a run for the hens at Dad's house at Wooli, we then had to wait for suitable weather for the short trip around to Yamba under motor, which we completed on 2nd February. Our next focus was the mast. After completing the assembly of the fittings, All Yacht Spars, who were to stand the mast, had arranged to come on 7th March, but had issues with their travel schedule, and could not come to Yamba until 19th March. Once the mast was on, we were able to check the fit of the sails for the first time, and we were in for bad news. The sail plan provided as part of the boat plan was not accurate, and so the genoa and staysail both had to be cut down to fit. Once the sails were ready, and some shake down sails up and down the lower river were completed, we were looking for a weather window to move to the Gold Coast seaway. We had decided not to attempt short hops up the NSW coast, with the need to co-ordinate bar crossings with the flood tides, and instead go for the long 100 mile trip to the Seaway in one hop.

12 April - Yamba to Bums Bay

After yesterday's trip home to collect more beer, we thought that the forecast for tomorrow looked suitable to head north. But I was worried about the forecast large swells that came with the suitable wind forecast, with the tide running out from daylight on. I left the boat and Yamba at 0700 to take the Landcruiser home to PV. I would have liked to take the time to look at the bar with the tide high but ebbing. I had to go straight home in order to get a lift to town with Nic. Just time for a commando style shopping at Woolies before the bus to Yamba. Saw Glyda on the bus from Ulmarra to Maclean. Talked to Dad and John Hall about the plans for tomorrow on the phone while on the bus.

I arrived back at Yamba having decided to head to sea. Forecast is for a southerly this evening, with a large swell warning forecast for tomorrow. While the southerly might be useful for the trip north, the bar would be difficult tomorrow morning, with low tide. Seemed like the immediate departure might be the best option, using the overnight wind change to get north in a hurry. It seemed like the best idea. I was unsure about what average speed to expect, and so planned that we would be at sea overnight anyway, so why not leave before dark instead of arrive early morning?

With overcast skies and low batteries, we ran to genset over lunch to ensure good electrical power while at sea.

Log started at 1447. Moving at 1500. Progress was initially slow, with no wind and glassy roly sea. Motored on till about 1600 and tried sailing. Soon back to motor-sailing under genoa alone. By 1700 wind had picked up from the NE and we were sailing hard onto the wind at about 5 knots. Trying to hold the coast to avoid the current and shipping traffic offshore. By sunset we were off Evans Head, and could see occasional flash of lightning in the north. Birgit headed inside to the saloon as the night fell.

Continued on with only genoa, being cautious about going on deck alone at night. By 2200 the wind had freshened to the point where we were sailing at better than 6 knots and still pointing high, as there was shipping traffic converging on us from the south. AIS gave us an hour's warning that the ship would pass within a few hundred metres to the east, but I was reluctant to come up higher to the east as there was south

bound shipping further out, and I was still trying to hold the coast to avoid the current. The ship was converging from behind and to the east, but I couldn't fall away further west as charts indicated a number of unlit buoys close to our track and to the west. In the end, the ship passed to the east of us by only 300 metres while we were only 200 metres east of the buoy while we were off Ballina. Soon we were sailing at 8 knots boatspeed, but only 7 knots SOG.

During the night, the lightning intensified, becoming an almost constant light. By midnight we were off Cape Byron, with lightning now striking around us, and the storm hit. At first it provided assisting wind, but soon backed and was driving us west. I furled genoa and started both motors. Using the radar to assist with the location of the storm centre, and driving into the current, I thought we could maintain position under motor until the storm passed. Soon we were moving at only 2 knots through the water and I realised we were actually going backwards over the ground.

After the storm passed, southerly winds of over 30 knots drove up huge seas. With no experience in this boat, I chose to continue slowly motoring until daylight. The waves built from the south, and the noise of the water on the hull was incredible. The night was dark with no moon and no stars. With the autopilot at the helm, I set my clock to 15 minutes timer and laid down for snippets of rest. By 0500, there was enough light to again go out and gradually unfurl the genoa, little by little. Winds were more than 30 knots true and around 25 knots apparent, and we were surfing a very short steep wave along the northern coast heading for the Tweed. As we turned further west after the border, some shelter was provided by the coast, and by 0900 we were off the Gold Coast with full genoa reaching at good speed before the surfing waves.

Entered the Gold Coast seaway at about 1100, and after checking and rejected the anchorage at the north of Wavebreak Island due to excessive tidal flow, we headed for Bums Bay. After a quick lunch and a check of everything on deck, I was down for a sleep and didn't move until the next morning.

Total distance 100.7 Trip run 100.7

13 April - Bums Bay

Slept till late. On board all day. Completely tired from the overnight journey and lack of sleep.

14 April - Bums Bay

Rode bike up to Whitworths. Left broken winch handle for warranty replacement, and bought some gear such as fenders for the steps. Struggle with bags of items on the bike. Bought new Samsung tablet for Birgit at Target.

16 April - Bums Bay

Barry Ott and Jennifer came by paddle board to visit. Then Isabella arrived to stay the night. Izi took me shopping to Aldi and petrol in the afternoon.

17 April - Bums Bay

Walked on dog beach under the sand jetty with Isabella. She left late morning, and then Liah and Jake arrived, followed soon after by Jeremy and family.

18 April - Bums Bay

Shopping at Australia Fair by bike. Dinghy ride to the boat ramp to check the water situation. Figured we could get the hoses to reach from the tap to the pontoon. Waited till after dark for the boat wash to subside and took SBZ down to the pontoon for water.

19 April - Bums Bay to Bedroom

Left Bums early. Full of fuel and shopping, we had no expectations about the trip to Moreton Bay. We're ready to start cruising.

At first there was no wind, so with no timetable, stopped at Browns Island opposite Paradise Point for morning tea and wait for some wind.

Back out in the channel, we soon had a very light SW breeze, and broke out the spinnaker for the first time. Winds were light and the water flat, so it was a good opportunity to try out the sheeting positions on the spinnaker. This took us most the way to Tipplers, where the wind dropped and then went NE. Had to motor sail past the clubs, and then motored up the channel to the Southern Bedroom.

Went ashore for yabbies and then fishing in the channels. Nice catch of bream.

Total distance 130.0 Trip run 22.6

20 April - Southern Bedroom to Dunwich

While it was close to top of the tide, we attempted to leave Southern Bedroom by going north and around Pandanus Island. We ran aground, gently touching, but as it was close to high tide, we backed up out and retraced track back out to Tipplers Channel and then across to Canaipa Passage via Whalleys Gutter, 5 Ways, and McKenzies Channel. No wind so motoring. Stopped at Slipping Sands to wait for wind as we were pushing against a strong ebb tide.

The SE breeze filled in at up to 15 knots, and gave us a run up the channel under genoa alone, at times pinching up hard on the wind across some of the reaches towards the east. We stopped at Canaipa Pt for BBQ lunch, looking up the channel to Moreton Bay. For the first time in days, there was a water horizon beckoning us on.

After lunch, nice reach out the channel and along North Stradbroke Island up to Dunwich under genoa and main where we anchored for the night. Video of the sail uploaded to Facebook. Went ashore for a walk around the Dunwich cemetery.

Total Distance 157.4

21 April - Dunwich to Days Gutter

0800 start. Motored out of the Dunwich channel and down Rainbow Channel, sailing before light SW breeze under overcast sky. Ended up with the spinnaker along to Amity Point where we dropped all sail and motored across towards Reeder's Point looking for an entrance. It was almost high tide, so we made a run across the spits while it was still flooding, at times almost touching, before getting up into Days Gutter, where we anchored off at 1100.

It was high tide and water was everywhere. We were really surprised at the extensive sand banks exposed as the tide went out, making the channels easier to locate. Had a walk along the beach in the afternoon.

Full moon rose over Moreton Island.

Total Distance 180.0 NM.

22 April - Days Gutter to St Helena

It was a 0800 start, while the tide was low and flooding as we motored out Black Gutter into Browns Gutter and into Rous channel. Spotted a dugong close to the banks. We continued motoring until out of channel near Chain Banks.

Sailed for short while, passing a number of fishing boats anchored on the Harry Atkinson Reef, but eventually the wind dropped altogether. The bay glassed out, so we went below and cooked up some lunch hoping for the breeze to fill in again. But alas, we ended motoring into Manly, where we anchored just off the harbour entrance to the north and went ashore with the dinghy. It's a very unfriendly marina to visit, with no suitable dinghy approach. It was very slippery and dangerous, but we did it. The anchorage outside was very shallow, and we were nearly on the bottom at low tide.

I took bike in to Tingalpa chandlery for safety gear, blocks and coat. Back via Bunnings and IGA for milk.

Back to boat by 1700; up anchor immediately as it would soon be dark, and sailed close hauled across to St Helena Is. Strong SE forecast, so anchored just around corner near to wharf.

Total Distance 197.2

26 April - St Helena to Tangalooma

Been bunkered down for days with SE winds up to 35 knots. We went ashore on the 23rd for a look around and explore, but as the island is a National Park, Bess had to stay on board. We did not really stretch out and have a good look around as we were worried about leaving Bess on board, as the last time we tried this back at Yamba, she swam ashore.

We had a strange catch over the weekend, with the crab trap out off the back of the boat. It came up with the trap filled with a wobbegong shark. It took some effort to get it out.

After that, we were stuck onboard as the water was too choppy to put the dinghy down. Today, the wind was starting to moderate, and the forecast for the next few days getting better.

After lunch, we set off and sailed under double reefed main and part furled genoa, heading for Tangalooma in 25 knot winds. Set sail under the lee of St Helena at 1400, and then reached out above Mud Island and across towards Tangalooma. As we came out into open water, conditions moderated further, and we first unfurled genoa completely and later threw out one reef. We were anchored at Tangalooma by 1630.

Total Distance 213.7nm. Anchored at 27°09.42.24S 153°22.07.98E

27 April - Tangalooma

Barry Ott and Jennifer arrived at Tangalooma in their Prout. We had a walk and swim on the beach and climbed up the sandhill. We went over later for an afternoon visit to their boat.

28 April - Tangalooma to Mooloolaba

Left Tangalooma for Mooloolaba at 0730.

Spinnaker run under light SE breeze as far as the North West Channel, across the Spitfire Channel, at times hitting 8 knots in the light breeze. Wind freshening and getting around to E-NE, so doused spinnaker. Could not get the sock to furl, so had to drop it manually with the sail going into the water at around 0930 at 27°01.10.62S 153°14.37.98E.

Continued sailing as far as Caloundra, where the wind died as we had to turn to the east and clear banks, forcing us to use the stb motor to point up and motorsail into the breeze and swell. Huge swells were breaking heavily over the North Banks, so had to follow the channel right in and around the corner.

Once again offshore with Mooloolaba in sight, we were able to again set sail and lift the motors. Ended up motor sailing into the bay where we dropped sail and watched the breakers on the bar before attempting the entrance. Waves were quite large, and breaking across the entrance with the waves arriving obliquely at more than 45° to the line of the walls. I approached in line with the shallower eastern wall, and then turned sharply towards the western wall so that we were running almost with the waves on the bar.

Motored well up the river to 26°41.43.62S 153°07.04.92E at 1500.

Total Distance 250.35 NM.

5 May - Mooloolaba to Bullock Point GSS

Left Mooloolaba in the dark at 0500. By the time we had motored out to the bar it was 0600 and breaking daylight. Light SW breeze came around to SE, but very light all day. Sloppy roly seas.

In retrospect, we should have used the spinnaker, but the problems on the last passage had us scared off.

Hooked Mack Tuna as we came past Double Island Point. Motored the last hour to the Wide Bay Bar. Bar was good, but mad mile so sloppy. There was a local fishing boat that came in behind and then cut the corner into mad mile, kept east of the waypoints and headed for Inskip Point. We followed him and avoided much turbulence on end of Fraser Island.

There were just too many boats at Pelican Point, so we continued upstream past Bullock Point and anchored in the estuary just upstream from the moored barges.

Anchor down by 1730 at 25°49.34.74S 153°03.12.42E

Total Distance 314.0 (log +50)

6 May - Bullock Point to TeeBar Creek

We left the crab pot in over night over the back of the boat. In the morning it was full of mud crabs, but most were jennies and had to be released. The one big buck was nice and big, but was not very full of flesh, but was still a nice change from the swimmer crabs. This was our first muddie.

Had a walk around Bullock Point, before sailing out to Pelican Point under genoa, only to find there were even more boats, so we decided to head up to Teebar Creek. After tacking back and forward around Ida Island, failing light caused us to motor up at 10 knots to get up Teebar before dark. Anchored off the end of the first point, surrounded by bait fishing jumping, but were not able to catch anything overnight.

Total Distance 326.89 (log +60) NM.

7 May - Teebar to Sheridan Flats

After a long slow breakfast, the SE was starting to fill in. At 0920 we motored out into the main channel, and ran down under spinnaker. We carried it on stb tack down to Pelican Bay where we dropped and re-rigged it before hoisting again on port tack. We're getting better at handling the spinnaker, realising that the halyard must be tensioned up to get the sock to work properly.

The wind went fluky as we ran up the Great Sandy Straits past Browns Gutter, and the autopilot sailing in wind mode carried us over towards Poona Point, where we dropped sail and stopped for lunch at 1220. Over lunch, the wind got around to the SW and freshened.

By the time we hoisted sail again at 1340, it was blowing up to 20 knots. With genoa and main, we reached at high speed across to Snout Point and into the eastern channel along the side of Fraser Island. Despite the dropping tide, we pushed on past Garrys Anchorage as there were so many boats and the wind so favourable. We were being chased by two other cats, and gybing constantly back and forward as the channel meandered around the islands laying off Fraser. We were surprised to find houses on some of these islands; some of them quite substantial, and some appeared to be set up as holiday accommodation.

Off Turkey Island, we found water running hard over sandbanks, making pressure waves right where the channel should have been. We hit bottom hard and bounced, knocking us off course, right where the channel turns east and we are trying to come hard up onto the wind. Around the wrong side of a channel mark, and then more pressure waves running over shallow water. Bang, bang again, and then the tiller was tight and wouldn't turn. We dropped sail and motored on to Sheridan Flats anchorage using only the two throttles for control.

Total Distance 352.84 (log +60) NM.

8 May - Sheridan Flats

Found that the port rudder was bent into the hull. I was able to drop the rudder a centimetre on its bearings, and it came clear. Motored on over the sand spit at the top of tide, and dried out to inspect the rudder out of the water.

Dug a massive hole under the rudder in the sand and mud so that we had it clear to properly inspect. Decided that there was not binding on the bearings, and that if we leave it dropped a centimetre low, that we make do with how it is for this year, and deal with it when we are back home again.

Tide started coming back in after dinner, and by 2000 we were fishing. Caught a couple of nice bream on plastics. Motored back out to channel and anchored for the night.

9 May - Sheridan Flats

Took dinghy for long row up Yankee Jack Creek fishing. Caught nothing, but had a nice look around.

11 May - Sheridan Flats to Scarness

Motored out of the anchorage at 0930, came head to wind to raise reefed main, and came back on course. Unfurled genoa and ran before fresh SW wind. Had 15 minute averages of better than 8 knots. Cooked and ate lunch while under way. Sailed right down the channel and out to Scarness. Anchored off the beach and went shopping.

Total Distance 381.94 (log +60) NM.

12 May - Scarness to Burnett Heads

Up anchor 0700 and set sail without the motor. Chose a direct line to Burnett Heads on a beam reach making better than 8 knots at first, while another cat from Scarness left after us and headed further out under spinnaker. We later learned that cat to be Blinder, and they ended up well out to sea, and then came in, almost on the coast looking for wind.

By 1045, we had almost no wind and were doing less than 4 knots. We were off Elliott Heads, and it was almost top of the tide, so we considered entering there instead of the Burnett. We soon had the stb motor running and at first motor sailed and then later dropped sail altogether for a while, before we could again sail the last few miles into Burnett Heads.

Schools of mackerel everywhere. We stopped next to the channel marker and fished for a while in amongst all the local fishos.

Motored around the harbour, finding no water anywhere, and no where really suitable to anchor. Ended up anchored downstream from the sailing club. Dinghy into sailing club, and found the caretaker most accommodating with us using their pontoon, as long as it's not race day.

13 May - Burnett Heads

Femme and Jim came to visit. BBQ lunch and then Jim took me shopping in Bundaberg.

Dinghy outboard stopped, and would not restart.

14 May - Burnett Heads to 1770

Motored down river, and out the heads. Light SW wind was going SE. Sailed through sloppy seas and light conditions to 1770. Arrived at top of tide and needed four

attempts to find a suitable anchorage. Ended up on the outside edge of the channel opposite the park.

Total Distance 490.19 (log +70) NM.

15 May - 1770

Worked on dinghy outboard. Cleaned and adjusted spark plug, and all ok.

We spent this period at 1770 going for walks on the sand flats at low tide, going fishing, and exploring the town. We took the bikes ashore and rode as far as Agnes Waters, where we bought our masks and fins. We were anchored close to the spit, and went ashore at low tide each day for yabbies out of the gravel pit, and catching whiting off the boat. It was hot action on the whiting. If there was not a fish on the hook the moment it hit the water, then the bait was gone.

We were in town for the Captain Cook celebrations, which included a re-enactment of the landing by the local theatrical group.

21 May - 1770 to Pancake Creek

It was a late start out of 1770 at the bottom of the tide. Touched a couple of times as we approached the last channel marker, but it was very soft sand that we dragged through. Fresh SE wind, so ran under genoa alone at around 8 knots, across to Bustard Head and Pancake Creek. Motored up the creek and anchored upstream of all other boats, just down from Chinamans Creek.

Total Distance 505.93 (log +70) NM.

Had a couple of days in Pancake Creek exploring the creeks and sand flats fishing for whiting.

24 May - Pancake Creek to Gladstone

Up early and left in the dark and moonlight at 0330. The sky was much more overcast than we had hoped and it was very dark. Used our incoming track on the plotter to find our way out. It's a narrow channel, with several unlit marks.

No wind, so motoring obligatory. Shut down the port engine, running on the stb motor at about 2800rpm. Set course to Boyne Cutting on the autopilot, and Birgit took first watch, so I lied down in the saloon with Bess until dawn, and then swapped. Sunrise broke when we were around Rodds Peninsula and the cargo ships at anchor. Mackerel chased baitfish as we passed the channel markers. Continued north up the South Bypass Channel.

Coming past South Trees, a trawler working, heading south with nets out, was being covered by pied cormorants. The boat was entirely covered, with the gantry entirely packed out, birds circling and diving into the net, and more cormorants approaching from every direction.

We had already rung Gladstone Marina a couple of days ago to make contact. As we were coming up the channel, we again made a phone call to Gladstone Marina, and arranged the berth, which we had to be careful about as the stb motor would not engage reverse. We were getting ready to head off on the bikes when we spotted Dad

walking along the waterfront. Went shopping in the car, and provisioned up for the trip north.

Total Distance 543.25 (log +77) 23.49.9400S 151.14.653E

Plans at this stage may be to drop Dad around Yeppoon somewhere or take him all the way to Mackay.

25 May - Gladstone to Graham Creek

After last shopping, cousin dropped in to look at boat and have cuppa. It was after 1600 before we were away from the marina. Had trouble with the stb motor engaging reverse, and the port motor decided to cut out and refuse to restart just as we were casting off. Turned out that I had not reconnected the fuel hose after filling the tank. This caused us to rub up against the port side of the berth.

Away from Auckland Creek with a NE breeze, we hoisted main as soon as we were clear of Clinton Wharves. Soon with motors off, we were sailing on for Targinie Channel. Shocking amount of development on Curtis Island with the gas plants. Went around the west side of Passage Islands, pointing as high as possible onto the wind. When we ran out of channel, started both motors and ran hard to Graham Creek.

Anchor down just on dark, and put the crab trabs down on the southern shore just as we ran out of light.

Total Distance 553.53 (log +77) 23.44.4740S 151.10.8770E

26 May - Graham Creek to Hobble Gutter

After breakfast, started fishing. With no prospects, we lifted the anchor to drift with the wind and tide further up the creek. We were soon getting too close to the south bank, so started the stb motor and headed up the creek. Turned up Hobble Gutter, and anchored mid stream.

Put out the crab traps and spent the day fishing.

Total Distance 558.53 (log +80) 23°43.2000S 151°13.3050E

27 May - Hobble Creek to Pacific Creek

Sand flies made it impossible to get out of bed. We had breakfast while waiting enough tide to recover the traps, and set off as soon as possible. With a NW breeze, we set the genoa running down the gutter, and came up onto the wind out in main creek. There was a large motor cat sitting in the creek with the couple on board fishing as we sailed by and called to them. We sailed the lifts as much as possible trying to claw off the southern shore, but ended up motor sailing to clear the points along the creek, and then continued under power as we wanted to catch the tide to carry us through The Narrows.

Passed Africat as we approached Black Swan. They had slowed to a crawl, and we checked they were ok as we passed. They were concerned about arriving too early, as they drew 1.2m, but it was only an hour till top of tide so we continued on thinking we had the tide just right.

Once through The Narrows and back out into the channel west of the cattle crossing, we dropped anchor and had lunch. Continued on to around Mosquito Creek, when the NE was free enough for us to sail across to the mouth of Deception Creek. With the assistance of the dropping tide, we ended up tacking across the channel all the way up to the mouth of Pacific Creek, where we crossed the bar right on the bottom of the tide, and made our way upstream to anchor. With the channel so narrow it is a difficult anchorage as not much scope is available.

There was some discussion about whether this means that we have crossed the Tropic of Capricorn. There appears to be some disagreement about what represents the line of tropic; is it the extreme position achieved by the sun in this year, or is it an arbitrary line once decided upon? It seems there is no proper formal definition, and may actually change from year to year. But we are however very close to if not across the line.

Total Distance 580.38 (log +82) NM 23°29.644S 150°59.507E

28 May - Pacific Creek to Great Keppel Island

Went for a walk to the lighthouse after breakfast. Went too far downstream before beaching the dinghy, and then decided to walk north instead of back to the wharf. Soon we were squelching through thick mud, and the occupants of the huts had to come out with water to wash us off. The locals gave us some directions about the track up the hill to the lighthouse.

Back on the boat, we had a quick lunch and headed off for GKI. With 30 miles to go, and 5 hours of light, we had to run the stb motor at just over 3000rpm to make GKI before dark.

Total Distance 600.45 (log +82) NM. 23°09.701S 150°57.428E

We spent this time at GKI going for bushwalks on the Island, fishing and collecting around the shore, and just enjoying the relaxation.

2 June - GKI to Port Clinton

Left GKI early and sailed across to Rosslyn Bay. Dropped off Dad. Made sail again straight away, and headed for Port Clinton. At first, wind was fresh from SE. We were at first reaching at 8 knots, but by noon, the wind had dropped, and at times had NE 5 knots.

Eventually it filled in again from the East and we were able to continue on to Pt Clinton, where we sailed in right up to Bullock Point.

Total Distance 663.36 (log +88) 22°32.226S 150°45.104E

3 June - Port Clinton South Arm

Spent the morning fishing and recovering from the sail yesterday. Tat2 came by at about 1600, saying that the forecast NW winds will make Mt Flinders too uncomfortable. They suggested that we follow them the south arm. I intended waiting for the 1645 forecast on the BOM website, but when I saw how far they had travelled, decided that we had to leave now or it would be too late after the forecast.

Arrived upstream in time to get the traps set before dark. It looks like croc country up here.

Total Distance 669.36 (log +94) NM. 22°37.8S 150°43.8E

5 June - Port Clinton to Island Head Creek

Sailed down the south arm and all the way out to sea. The wind was from the W, and free enough to just make it out the narrow channel without motor assistance. Sailed this under genoa alone, in case we had to quickly douse sail and motor.

Once clear of heads, we raised the main, but soon ran out of wind. The fickle wind went everywhere, and in the end came in from the NW, but we had to motor into Pearl Bay. The wind had so much N in the NW that Pearl Bay was untenable, so we quickly set sail again for Island Head.

Entered Island Head via the north channel. As I was winding up the troll line, I snagged a rod in the holder and flicked it overboard. Luckily, we were motoring at the time, so quickly circled back as the rod tip foam provided enough floatation to hold the end of the rod out of the water.

There were about 20 boats anchored along the shore. Motored past Tat2 who told us to get set and get in on the beach for sundowners. Eventually we ended up anchored off Swanning Around in about 10m.

By top of the tide, there was too much water for the chain and we dragged. I forgot how big the tides are here, and didn't make enough allowance. Big wind gusts and reduced scope had us drifting across to the east shore. Using the plotter to backtrack, we reset again in about the same spot with all chain deployed.

Total Distance (log +118)

Swanning Around and many other boats left the next morning.

Learned later that another boat had also dragged, and had collided with its neighbour, causing some damage. (PS - later learned that the other damaged boat was Catina)

10 June - Island Head Creek

Spent the day planning to leave tomorrow. There is a strong wind warning for the next few days with 30 knot SE winds.

Walked on beach to Pine Trees and had a surf. Went fishing in the first creek. Only just made it back for sundowners. Talk with other yachties had me worried about heading off tomorrow. It was not till we were back on board that we decided that we should stay on until after the strong winds have passed through.

11 June - Island Head Creek

Up at 0630 to listen to weather. Forecast confirmed decision to stay. Tomorrow is predicted to 30 knots. After breakfast, at the suggestion of Paul off SachaB, we moved across the creek to the SE side, out of the weather. All the boats moved across as the first anchorage was becoming a lee shore. Anchored off the steep-to shore and went for a walk on the sandbanks, inspecting damage to the vegetation from Cyclone Marcia last year.

Sundowners on the sandbank tonight.

Wind up to 20 knots.

Total Distance (log +120)

12 June - Island Head Creek

Found we were too close to Tom in "Ishka" when the tide was flooding overnight. I spent an hour on watch before the ebb to ensure there was no damage.

At the bottom of the tide, we raised anchor and moved a little further upstream, and set the anchor with all chain deployed.

Spent the entire day on board with winds up to 25 knots.

22°22.3125S 150°38.7471E

13 June - Island Head Creek

Early rain squalls with the water catchers out.

Took Bess for walk on sandbanks at low tide. Walked to the first creek, which was completely dry. Caught in a rain squall on the way back.

Winds up to 30 knots.

17 June - Island Head Creek to Supply Bay

Up at 0530, up anchor at 0600. Sailed out of Island Head, starting the stb engine to push through the wash bouncing off the shore as we came out through the heads. Sailed with main to stb and gybed the genoa back and forward from one side to the other, going wing and wind at 170° or coming up to fill the genoa at 145°. Had the staysail barber-hauled out to the rail. Sailing between Reeflection inside to port going under spinnaker alone, and Miz Behavin ahead. As we rounded Cape Townsend, Reeflection dropped sail and motored on ahead while Miz Behavin broke out their spinnaker and headed on towards the Duke group of islands.

The wind veered as we round the point, and we were suddenly pushing into the ebb tide and a very short steep sea, surfing down every wave. Continued until we were off the anchorage, and motored in past Reeflection, Sacha B and Emma Jane and dropped anchor at the top of the tide in 5.0m.

Went ashore at low tide, and fossicked for oysters. Collected a large number of huge black lipped.

Sundowners on Emma Jane this evening.

Total Distance 826.30 (log +120)

18 June - Supply Bay to Hunter Island

Up anchor at 0700 with main already set. Wind was only 6 knots, so motor sailed out to the north to pick up the last couple of hours of the flood tide. Cut motor by 0800.

Sailed with full sail most the morning. It was mostly downwind, and we found it set best with main and staysails to leeward and the genoa to windward, running at about 170° off the wind. We gybed back and forth a few times with wind shifts, but the wind was generally less than 10 knots until about 1100, when it increased to around 15. About then, we first had a hook up on the rod towing the lure, but it dropped off as soon as I tried to wind it in. Soon after we had a hook up on the spoon on the rope line, and brought in a spotted mackerel about 1 metre long. We got it into the dinghy nearly as soon as possible, but it still took a half hour to clean up the mess it made in the cockpit.

With the ebb tide now nearly half out, and the range more than 5 metres today, we were being carried to the east at a fast rate. At times our heading was 280 but our COG was 310, or even 320 when there was a lull in the wind. We pushed into the tidal overfall running hard between Marble and Danger Islands, and I underestimated the east component of the current, and were soon close to the Marble side of the channel. Gybing back and forth to stay mid stream, we were doing 6-7 through the water, and at times less than 2 over the ground. It took an hour to clear the passage, and come past a couple of tinnies fishing the reef to the NW of Danger Island. You could see the fall of the water around the rocks, and particularly around one pinnacle to the NW of Danger Island where the upstream water appeared still and flat, the water poured around either side, and seemed to be a whole foot lower on the downstream side of the rock.

We continued up the channel between Tynemouth and Marble, noticing a couple of runabouts on the beach in front of the houses on Marble, going right up the channel till we were opposite the Hunter Island anchorage (known as "N" in the Curtis Coast book), where we dropped the staysail, then furled the genoa before sailing right into the bay, past Sacha B, Emma Jane and Reeflection, before dropping the main and then the anchor. We called them up on the radio and arranged fish for dinner on board tonight.

Had left-over veg curry lunch and then cleaned up and before sundowners on the beach at 1600. Had call from Thirsty Sound VMR requesting information to pass on to Dad about our location. It has been a whole fortnight now since we have been able to communicate out to the outside world.

After sundowners, back to SBZ for mackerel steaks and three lovely salads supplied by the other three boats.

Total Distance 849.97nm. 21°58.5220S 150°08.3688E

19 June - Hunter Island to Marble Island

Up anchor at 0730 to move from anchorage "N" to "L". The forecast is for NW wind to bring rain and thunderstorms, and then a shift to the SW later.

Took Bess ashore on the beach through surf and investigated the most interesting rock formation on the shore between the line of sand and grass. It appears to be a conglomerate, with large beach pebbles cemented into a porous iron rich matrix rock, full of eroded chimneys and holes. At first appearance, it looks like someone has concreted steps into the rocks, but it is much too extensive to be manmade. The camera was flat, so I was not able to take photos, and rain prevented an opportunity

to return with the other camera. Further investigation of this rock will have to wait for another trip.

The NW wind shift came hard, with gusts over 30 knots and heavy driving rain. At times visibility was almost zero. Sacha B left and moved up the passage, and radioed back that conditions there were much better. Reeflection headed around, but we waited on for a break in the rain.

21°58.9558S 150°08.6631E

After lunch moved around to the north side of Marble Island to anchorage "K" but with poor visibility both on land and in the water, anchored well clear of the other boats. Ran the genset for an hour. Had the water tanks overflowing before dark, and the heavy rain continued into the night. Really cold winds. We have the windows closed for the first time in Qld.

20 June - Marble Island to Digby Island

Up anchor at 0700. Sacha B had motored past on their way to Digby. We set off, and was signalled over by Doug from Reeflection who wanted to hand over a bag of information. We went past Emma Jane to wish Warren a Happy Birthday before we set sail too.

With SW winds over 15 knots, we were sailing under genoa and main at up to 10 at times, and had 15 minute averages better than 8 and one at 9. As the wind dropped, we raised the staysail, and stayed above the layline. The forecast was for the winds to go NW in the afternoon, so we stayed high to ensure we would be able to point to Digby, even if the wind backed on us.

By 1000 we were looking for wind, speeds at times down to 3. We stayed high, and when we had to run off the wind to make Digby, we furled the genoa and opened up the spinnaker.

Anchored at Digby by 1330.

Sundowners on the beach with Sacha B, Reeflection and Katmando. Forecast appears to be light and variable, so we might be here for a while.

Total Distance 885.31 (log +120) 21°29.5902S 149°54.7339E

21 June - Digby Island to Brampton Island

Up for a pee at 0345, and saw that Katmando were up and making sail. There had been wind earlier in the night, and Birgit had shut the hatch over the bed. There was wind enough to sail. Went back to bed, but I was soon back up again and making ready for sea. It was well after 0430 before we were under way, and about 0500 before sail was set. Wind about 10 from the SW.

Made north, passing to the west of Double Island and the east of Prudoe. Wind still SW at 10, but some periods of up to 15. Ships at anchor off Hay Point were an obstacle course, with some moving out to sea.

Continued on till off Keswick the wind died. Considered anchoring in the pass next to St Bees, but in the end dropped sail and motored the last two hours to Brampton. Here was Reeflection and Katmando, with a motor boat and a couple of other yachts.

Anchored at 20°47.8750S 149°15.9609E

Total Distance 944.70NM

22 June - Brampton Island to Goldsmith Island

Intending to make for Goldsmith and dry out in the creek using Doug's instructions. No wind, so planning to motor across. Doug and Jeanette dropped past in the dinghy. We motored out past Katmando, and then set sail for the first hour. Then motored on for the next 1 hour 30.

Motored straight up the creek and anchored off in three places.

Went to the beach for a swim before lunch. Bread was baked by the time we were back.

By 1400 we were on the bottom and starting to clean the waterline. By 1500 the boat was high and dry.

Total distance 951.42 NM. 20°44.6227S 149°09.8398E

23 June - Goldsmith Island Roylen Beach

Finished the last of the shore jobs, and prepared to float off. As the tide rose, schools of bream were under the boat. I turned the 6 yabbies I had caught into 3 nice bream.

Motored around to the NW bay (Roylen Beach?) of Goldsmith to wait out the night in the calm weather.

Message came in from dad to say that Col had died overnight.

Total Distance 952.78NM. 20°43.7084S 149°08.7646E

24 June - Goldsmith Island

No wind all day. Total glass-out conditions and temps in the high 20s. Had a swim on the shore and spent most the day doing maintenance.

25 June - Goldsmith Island to Airlie Beach

Strong SE wind change came through overnight. We were under sail by 0700 with one reef in the main and full genoa. At first I we ran in across the Cumberland Channel on port tack, and then DDW up the Whitsunday Passage. With the genoa to stb and the main boom out to port. The wind was gusting to the high 20s, and running wing and wing with a preventer on the main, the autopilot was allowing too much roll from side to side, and so we hand steered the whole trip, and with the wind shifts and current, were able to maintain that point of sail until past Dent Island.

Between Long and Dent Islands, we gybed across, coming up to 160-170 onto the wind over the port side, thinking we would pass through to the north of Long Island. But the angle of the waves was pushing us to the west, and the strong flood tide

overfalls between Long and South Molle had us too close, and so had to gybe back and forward a few times coming through to the western side of the Molle Islands.

As the tide began to flood in from the north, the seas picked up. As we came close past the western side of Dent Island, the seas seemed to be only two boat lengths apart, and 2-3 metres high. This meant that every wave would pick us up and surf us along, with speeds going into double figures almost every wave. If the wave doubled up at the right time, we would hold that wave for so long, with the speed just going up and up. We twice saw the dampened speed showing more than 15 knots.

We came around Pioneer Rocks and up onto the wind, and up into Airlie Beach. Furling the sails, we motored in past SachaB to say hello, and on to drop anchor just off the sailing club by 1230.

Total Distance 991nm.

29 June - Airlie to Stonehaven

Up anchor and motored out of the moorings at around 0930

Wind at 25 knots SE. With a reef in the main and full genoa, we broad reached across from Pioneer Rocks to Stonehaven, rarely dropping below 9 knots boatspeed. Maxi yacht Freight Train left Pioneer Rocks just ahead of us, and we caught them by Stonehaven (they were towing an inflatable dinghy). At times, when the waves caught us more favourably, we would surf up to over 12 knots.

Picked up a mooring just south of Anchor Point and stayed the night.

Dinghy in to the reef, and had a dive around a couple of bommies.

No TV reception or voice mobile phone, but internet was strong from the top of the mast.

30 June - Stonehaven to East Butterfly Bay

Sailed off the mooring, up the channel between Black and Longford Islands and around the west of Hayman Island and picked up a mooring at Blue Pearl Bay. The weather was partly cloudy, and cold wind, so we didn't feel like a swim. Stayed for lunch.

Sailed off the mooring and around the north of Hayman and into Butterfly Bay.

Picked up most east of the moorings in East BB, and had a dinghy ride around West BB and the shore of East BB.

1 July - West Butterfly Bay

Started with a dive off the beach at East BB. After lunch, we motored around to West BB and picked up another mooring and had a dive along the east side of the Bay.

2 July - Butterfly Bay

Day started with showers and strong winds. Stayed on the mooring.

Met Len and Margot from Farnatical.

3 July - Butterfly Bay to Langford Island

Wind still blowing 25 knots with bullets coming over the hills.

Sailed from BB out off east end of Hook Island under staysail and double reefed main, just to see how SBZ performs in these conditions. Pointing at 40° we were sailing at about 5 knots into heavy seas and not pounding too badly. It would make for an uncomfortable day, but it looks like we can sail into 25 knots ok. After about 15 minutes of this, we bore away and gybed, coming up to a close reach on port tack and unfurled most of the genoa for a fast sail back to Stonehaven. Coming by Stanley Point, the wind became too flukey under the lee of Hook Island so we had to motor on from there.

Spotted an empty mooring over at Langford Island, so detoured to there for lunch. Had a lazy afternoon. Strong winds made it unsuitable for a dive, so we dinghied around with the bathyscope. Stonehaven looked packed. I could count around 30 boats in there, so instead, we moved along to the end mooring for the night.

Sailed for 1:49 over 10.5nm for an avg of 5.9 and max of 11.3

4 July - Langford to Gulnare Inlet

Rolly night on mooring at Langford.

Decided to leave early and make the most of the flood tide to head south up Whitsunday Passage. Motored out past One Foot Island into the passage, and put up single reef main with staysail and partly furled genoa. Powered into 20 knot SE on port tack. Wind lifted and lifted, and then backed and dropped. We tacked and headed in past Nara into a big shower of rain, in which the wind dropped all together. Unreefed the main and genoa and sailed on into Cid Harbour, and then back out again, through a couple of tacks and headed into Gulnare.

Sailed for 4:05 over 21.7nm for an avg of 5.4 and a max of 9.4. Distance through the water was only 17.7nm.

Total Distance 1053nm.

5 July - Gulnare to Chalkies Beach

No wind. Total glass out conditions. Motored from Gulnare to Chalkies Beach.

P&O Pacific Aria anchored off Hamilton Island.

Cut between Fitzallen and Whitsunday Islands and motored across to Solway Passage.

Had flood tide assistance through Fitzallen Passage, and had ebb tide to assist through the Solway Passage.

Anchored on the ledge at Chalkies, and had a snorkel through the afternoon. Garry and Merc off Forever Dreamin anchored further south and with a charter Seawind 1000 we were the only boats in a sea of garfish overnight.

6 July - Chalkies to Whitehaven

Early morning SW change came through hard in the night. We moved early across from Chalkies across to Whitehaven.

Big sundowners on board with Alan and Margaret off Twisted, Ross and Louise off Phluid, Alan with Bill and Jeanette off Bad Cat and Garry and Merc off Forever Dreamin.

7 July - Whitehaven

Fishing in bay to south of Whitehaven. Lost lure in the morning. Caught spotted mackerel in PM.

Sundowners on Twisted

8 July - Whitehaven

Walk and swim on Whitehaven. Sundowners on SubZero.

9 July - Whitehaven

Worked on lights and electrical. Caught a couple of queenfish at the next bay to the south. Sundowners on Phluid.

12 July - Whitehaven to Windy Bay

Left Whitehaven around noon. Anchor jambed in the chocks.

Out through Solway Pass. A fleet of 10 Rivas came up through the pass from the south as we were being flushed out with 2 knots of flood tide. Sailed around the south of Haslewood Island. Saw whales just to the south of Worthington, so dropped sail and motored up the passage to the east. It turned into a washing machine that required both motors, but opened into the most beautiful bay on the north side of Lupton.

Sailed on around the north of Haslewood, and motored into Windy Bay. Had a very late lunch, and went for a walk on the beach at sunset, before rowing back around the east edge of the bay.

Total Distance 1075nm.

13 July - Windy Bay to Mays Bay

Sailed out of Windy Bay around the north of Esk Island and into Tongue Bay. Picked up a mooring, and walked up to the lookout over Hill Inlet. Back to the boat for lunch (Queenfish Laksa). After 1400, put a reef in the main, dropped the mooring and sailed out of Tongue Bay, first on stb tack until clear of Whitsunday Island, and then gybed the main over to the stb side while leaving the genoa and staysail on the port side. Around the top of Whitsunday Island, we saw and were very very close to a whale. Had to motor through Hook Passage before getting set close hauled on port to sail in towards Cid Harbour before tacking into Mays Bay.

Sailed for 3:15 over 18.2NM at avg 5.6 and max 8.8.

Total Distance 1093nm.

14 July - Mays Bay

Strong winds came through the night, as forecast. Stayed on anchor until low tide, when the wind coming around the point to the west (instead of over the hill as expected) was creating a lee shore only metres from the boat. So we moved further west along Mays Bay. It was found that one of the anchor bridles had parted one

strand of the rope. There was a lot of wind and noise through the night. I used one of the mooring lines to replace one side to the bridle.

15 July - Mays Bay

Wind increased through the afternoon, with heavy squalls and rain. Through the night it increased further, requiring us to set the anchor alarm. We had over 50m chain out in less than 5m of water. With the Triton wind alarm set at 40 knots, we had it go off during the evening. In the early hours, I woke and was worried that the other half of the bridle had parted, so went to check, but all was ok. Not long after, I was woken from heavy sleep by a snap and jerk, so back on with the wet gear again. This time the bridle had parted, so the earlier rehearsal made it quicker. Back to bed.

16 July - Mays Bay

Woke to dead calm. Water glassy all day. Went for a row around the rocks.

17 July - Mays Bay to Funnel Bay

Wind back again and gusting. With the forecast for winds from the East, the option of going back around the islands was not appealing, so decided to head for Funnel Bay from where we can duck around to Airlie.

Sailed off the anchor, but had problems with the anchor chain jamming in the locker.

Broad reach down the passage around the top of North Molle. With full sail in about 15 knots of SE, we were easily making half wind speed. As we came up onto heading to Point Pioneer, the winds increased to almost 30 knots, so the staysail came down and we were still doing more than 9 knots at about 60° to the wind.

Came deep into Funnel Bay and anchored next to Katmando, where we went for raindowners.

18 July - Funnel Bay

Strong winds had me worried about heading around to Airlie. Decided to stay on at Funnel for the day.

19 July - Funnel Bay to Cannonvale

Sailed off the anchor mid morning and headed around to Cannonvale under genoa alone. Sailed right into the mooring field and motored over to the VMR to anchor.

Mailsail off by bike to Airlie Sails for repair to luff slides. Bought a couple of rolls of rope from Whitsunday Chandlery, who lent us the electric heat knife.

25 July - Cannonvale

Gas bottle needed refill, and Supercheap loyalty credits were to expire, so back out to Cannonvale Centro for shopping.

Total Distance 1110nm.

26 July - Cannonvale to Cid Harbour.

Hard onto wind from the start. Mostly sailing on wind autopilot set at 38-40 with just genoa and main. Tacked four times coming up Molle Channel and then across the passage, and free at the end. Had the genoa sheets hook up on the mast winch a couple of times, so removed the outside sheets to reduce the chance.

It was a very fast sail to windward in 15 knots true and 20 knots apparent, sitting on better than 7 most the time. Easily making more than half true wind speed when working to windward.

Whales in Cid Hbr as we arrived. Once past Loriard Point and Cid Island, the wind dropped completely in the channel, and it took an hour to cover the last couple of miles, sailing along with whales.

Sailed for 3:31 over 20.1NM at avg 5.1 and max 8.9.

Total Distance 1130nm.

29 July - Cid Harbour to Airlie Beach

After a few days at anchor at Cid, our parcel is ready to collect at Airlie. We decide to leave late, and make a loaf of fruit bread for lunch first.

Fast sail under just genoa in a fresh SE breeze. Wind was up to 25 knots at times.

Sailed for 2:32 over 14.8NM at an avg 5.8 and max 8.9 total 1412NM.

30 July - Airlie

Market day at Airlie. I went ashore on my own first, and came back with three bags full of fruit and veg. After a cuppa, Birgit went to the market while I took Bess for a walk around to Abel Point to buy a new anchor shackle at the chandlery. While the plan was to head off in the arvo, we ended up staying on board at anchor all day.

31 July - Airlie to Woodwark Bay

We went for one last swim at the lagoon and hit at the supermarket in the morning.

After lunch, the sailing club were sailing dinghies around buoys around us at anchor, and we picked up and moved up to Woodward Bay. Sailed up under genoa alone.

Sailed for 1:43 over 9NM at 5.2 and max 6.9 total 1420.

In the dark, caught a little grunter on some beef fat, and then caught a small shark on the fillet of fish.

1 August - onboard at Woodwark

Stayed on anchor all day. Went for a dingy row all around the bay fishing, and then had the people off Salter over for sundowners. Total glass out for most the day.

2 August - Woodwark to Double Bay

Visit to Salter, and then under way.

Sailed off the anchor, and tacked up out of Woodwark. It was not until we were moving that we saw Emma Jane around the corner. Rang Sharkie off Tat2, but they were

almost at Bowen. Sailed into East Double Bay, rounded up and dropped sail and then anchor, all with no motors. Anchored behind Sacha B, so called on the radio and they came over for sundowners.

Sailed 1:31 over 6NM avg 3.9 and 5.9 max for 1425 total. Good result for total glass out conditions.

3 August - Double Bay to Jonah Bay

Expected wind and weather change came through overnight. In the middle of the night, it was a strong NW, and had shifted to SW in the early morning. By 8am it was SE at 25knots or more, so we decided to sit it out for a couple of hours before heading off.

We made water for an hour, and then up anchor at 11:15 with reefed main and genoa. But then the wind dropped, and we had glass out for more than an hour. It wasn't too bad as we had a bit of tide carrying us out, and dolphins busy chasing fish. Through out the reef in the mainsail.

Motored over into the wind that was coming out of west Double Bay. The wind then picked up, and we had gusts of over 25 knots, and were really pushing along to windward on flat water and really overpowered.

We stopped in the bay just north of Earlando for lunch. Made some really yummy chicken rissoles with heaps of chilli, ginger, coriander, curry and other secret spices. At lunch time, I saw on the chartplotter that we had a max of 11.6k.

After lunch, the reef went back in, and we sailed inside Olden Island and around George Point, tacking up the channel inside Saddleback Island and into Nellie Bay.

Forgot to check the daily run stats, but the total is now 1438NM.

6 August - Jonah Bay to Gloucester Passage

Short sail across the bay and up the passage under genoa alone. Once through the passage, we came up onto the wind to head south of Passage Island and then tacked to head into the beach. Unfortunately, when we tacked, no one thought about the line trolling behind, and with just genoa, we came into irons and had the line wrap around the rudder, but managed to clear it using the inflatable and long arms.

8 August - Gloucester Passage to Cape Upstart

We used the motor to assist getting away from the anchorage with the mainsail hoisted with a reef in at around 0700. We were soon racing across Edgecumbe Bay on port tack at about 150 with full genoa and single reefed main and were passing Bowen before 0900. Katmando were anchored under the lee at Horseshoe Bay Kings Beach, and we communicated by text message as we passed.

The wind backed on us, and we were having trouble pointing low enough to clear the coal wharf at Abbott Point, so gybed the main across and poled out the genoa and sailed by the lee.

It was a fast sail across the bay, and as we came alongside Cape Upstart, the sea steepened, and we were soon surfing along making over 10 knots on many of the waves.

10 August - Cape Upstart to Horseshoe Bay

Overnight wind off the mountain was howling, and so I was not anxious about leaving, and had considered staying on another day. But the other boats that had arrived yesterday were all under way, and that convinced me to get moving.

Up anchor at 6:30, and had to swing around and gybe to clear the motor boat anchored to the south of us. At first the wind was strong, and we were galloping across the bay at more than 8 knots. But as we approached the cape at around 7am, the wind dropped. Soon we had the reef out, and not long after we had the starboard motor running and attempting to clear the coast in search of wind. We saw whales twice while reaching out, once inshore of us and soon after out to sea.

By 7:30 we had about 10knots from the SE and were reaching out to sea on starboard at a crawl. Peer Pressure were pointing lower and going faster than us with their MPS, and we soon gybed the genoa and poled it out, sailing by the lee at about 170 making only 4 or 5 knots with the autopilot running in wind mode.

As the day wore on, the wind was more like 15 than 10, but I don't think I saw it over 15 all day.

We continued on with the staysail added too. At about 11:30 I cooked up some rice to go with the dahl, and we had an early lunch. Soon after, we passing inshore of Starfish who were wallowing along with only genoa. As we turned down around Cape Bowling Green, the wind shifted with us. More whales. Soon we were on relatively flat water under the lee of Bowling Green and making better speed. I adjusted the instruments to show us the arrival at Magnetic Island. We could see it would be touch and go about arriving before dark, so kept pressing on.

Birgit went down for a sleep, and I started into a book, while stopping each paragraph to check our position and course and have a look around. Occasionally I would adjust the course by a couple of degrees, but we were moving along at around 6 to 7 all afternoon.

After the sleep, Birgit found some more whales out to sea, and we had a shower. It looked like we would arrive at Magnetic by about 18:30. But as we came past Cape Cleveland, and Birgit saw some more whales inshore, the wind began dropping again. By 1815, as we came abreast the Orchard Rocks and Radical Bay, the sun was setting, so we pulled in the pole and continued until about 1830 when we decided to put away all the sail and finish the last 2nm under motor. I think the max speed up till then had been 9.1 knots, which is pretty good considering we had such light winds all day.

But under motor, running them both at around 3000 rpm and with the following sea, the daily max speed went up to 11.5 knots. We came around into Horseshoe Bay in the dark, and manoeuvred on at low speed using the chartplotter and radar to assist the half moon directly overhead and found good anchorage close to the beach in the middle of the bay.

11 August - Moved in Horseshoe Bay

At the bottom of the tide, late morning, we moved deep into the bay, being just offshore from the eastern corner of the swimming enclosure; much more protected and close to shore.

19°06.898S 146°51.691E

During the week or so, we had trips around the island by bus and walks with other yachties. Sundowners on the beach most nights and even a lunch BBQ at the gazebo.

19 August - Horseshoe to Little Pioneer Bay

Tat2 Mark came over to return the movie HDD. They were ready to leave, as were we.

Up anchor and 0730, and by 0745 we were sailing NW wind and wind in front of the forecast 15-20SE. We sailed briskly for a few hours, and by 1030 had covered 16.9NM. But then the wind first backed to the NE, then dropped and came back from the west, so Birgit went for a sleep. At 11:35 we'd only covered 20.1 and by 12:35 24.0NM. Part of the trouble with the slow passage was the strong ebb tide. High tide was 0900 and the low was going to be a very low tide on account of last night's full moon. At one stage, I had over 30° variation between COG and BRW

Around 1400 we were in Steamer Passage just off Eclipse Island, with the wind in the SW at less than 5 knots, but with the seas still driving us along square astern and a favourable tide. Birgit was back up for lunch, and we then motored for about 20 mins to clear the lee of Falcon Island before we were sailing across the flat water of Challenger Bay at better than 3 knots in about 5 knots of breeze from the SW. The tide and leeway conspired against us pointing high enough to clear the southern end of Fantome Island, so we motorsailed for another 5 minutes to clear through to Juno Bay. But at the end of Juno Bay we weren't going to clear Harrier Point, so tacked out into the channel to gain some room to work north along the inside of Orpheus Island. So much for the forecast SE 15-20!

Coming back onto port tack, Birgit first complained about a fishy smell before we noticed a couple of whales laying on the surface not far upwind of us. The wind lifted, and we were soon pointing up, straight at these whales. They lay there breathing but not moving until we were only a few hundred metres away. It appeared to be a couple of adults and a baby. Then they started swimming directly towards us, swimming on the surface or just under, taking short breaths and increasing speed. Soon we were on direct collision course, with the two adults swimming together side by side, with shallow porpoising action directly at us. It looked like each whale were going to take out each hull. When they were only a boat length away, and there was nothing I could do to avoid a collision, they dived, lifting their tails high this time. The boat ghosted over the top of them, with a large upwelling of water coming up right behind the port hull. But we never saw any sign of them again.

We continued right up into Little Pioneer, dropping the staysail as we approached, and then furling the genoa and coming up to drop the main when we were only 100 metres from where we anchored just inside Tat2 at the south end of the bay. In the morning we were to move over to a mooring at the north end of the bay before a walk to the top of the hill.

Sailed 8:47 over 38.7NM avg 4.4 and 11.1 max for 1590 total. Mooring at 18°35.722S 146°29.261E

Had sundowners on Tat2 on 21st. Had a couple of whales come past for a wave while we were all watching.

22 August - Little Pioneer to Agnes Island

Dropped the mooring at 0630, following Sacha B, Reeflection and Catina out of the bay. All quiet on Tat2.

While the boats ahead were motoring away, we were immediately under sail, with a light SE of 10 knots, reaching at first to clear the lee, and then running. Across the passage to Zoe, we had a number of showers of rain, with the SE breeze dropping in favour of local breezes off the showers.

We were in Zoe Bay by 1000, with 4 other yachts already at anchor. Ozzie Mozzie motored past, complaining of their previous night with the excessive roll in the bay, and was heading to Ramsays Bay to try to find some rest. We were still uncommitted to any plans for the night, but put the anchor in well and had a quick cuppa while preparing for the walk. A 5m half cab came through the bay and into south creek.

At 1010, we had sailed 3:40 at 4.2 max 7.8 over 15.5NM and anchored at 18°23.808S 146°19.625E.

Ashore, we followed the track past a number of tents and through dense rainforest before coming out into a recently burned clearing beside the creek. The water was crystal clear, with the rounded boulders on the bottom at first appearing to be a dry creek bed, and only the noise of the creek running over the rocks in cascades making it clear that there was water. The path crossed the creek, and soon forked, with the path to the creek labelled with a no camping and no fishing sign. The no fishing seems strange, but the reason was soon obvious.

On the rocks on the bank of a huge waterhole at the base of a waterfall were the crews from Catina, Sacha B and Reeflection. Also were 5 young ones. We swam and chatted, with fish swimming around us while Paul and Lyn through food scraps around us for the fish. They were on their way back to their boats, having already been to the top of the falls, and were planning on moving around to Ramsays Bay. The young ones were locals, and offered to show us the path up, only to miss the turn and take a short cut straight up the rock wall. The view from the pools at the top was breathtaking, so we took lots of photos.

Back down to the boat, and Tat2 were just anchoring. Despite hearing our description of this enchanting place, they decided to motor on to Ramsays Bay for the night, with the plan to return tomorrow and then on to the Hinchinbrook Channel. We quickly lifted the anchor and were under full sail again, at first close hauled and then bearing away as we came around the headlands.

The first bay was full with 4 yachts, so we anchored to the north of Tat2 at the northern end of the Agnes Island bay. Soon another cat motored around the top of Hinchinbrook and dropped just outside us.

Anchored at 1510 having travelled another 1:10 avg 4.4 max 6.6 over 5.0NM.

While I was preparing food, Birgit noticed a runner on the beach, and soon he was standing on the beach immediately in from us and waving his arms at us. I went in to

him and learned that he had lost his backpack and tent into the ocean off the next headland, and needed help from a boat. As it was so late in the day and our dinghy too slow to get to the location and back before dark, I radioed for help, and Glen from Catina came and assisted.

23 August - Agnes Island to Zoe Bay

Mark from Tat2 came by in the dinghy early, stating the case for returning back to Zoe Bay. Sacha B and Reeflection were motoring away to the north in the calm.

We had breakfast and resolved to follow Tat2. Motored past Catina to tell them of our plans, and continued on close to the coast and back to Zoe Bay. We anchored close to shore in the northern corner of the bay, and went up the creek by dinghy. We returned quickly to get the handheld VHF so as to use the GPS for marking waypoints. Anchored off at 18°23.233'S 146°19.837'E

After morning tea on Tat2, we went ashore to drag their bait net. With buckets full of mullet, whiting, garfish and bait, it was an hour before the top of the tide and time to proceed up the creek. We motored in slowly, spun around and dropped the anchor, before quickly getting out the danforth to secure the stern with a bridle in the same method we were familiar with from our time at Wooli.

31 August - Zoe Bay to Dungeness

After 8 days up the creek, fishing, crabbing, netting on the beach, walks to the waterfalls, it was time to leave.

There were many activities while in the creek.

24th, walked the beach to the falls for swim.

25th, 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th,

30th, Net on the beach. Fished lower main channel. Crab lunch. Dinghy to south creek and swim.

We have had a wonderful time on the North Creek at Zoe, and the watchful eye of the company of Tat2 made it possible, given the lurking danger of crocodiles.

We were up at 0600 to find a heavy overcast sky with squalls from the east bringing wind and rain. But the tide was right and we had had enough of the midges, so we started the process of getting up the stern anchor without putting the dinghy down.

By 0730 we were motoring over the bar, retracing our track from the trip in. Once clear, we swapped to the starboard motor and ran it at 2800, and with no wind once at sea, we continued motoring all day, heading across to the fairway bouy before heading in to Lucinda. Rough trip across the front of the island, with the reflected waves causing the motor to cavitate twice.

Arrived at Dungeness just after high tide, so we circled around a couple of times before dropping the anchor between moorings. Had a cuppa and then a walk to the shop which also serves as a pub, and then decided to stay the night for the steak dinner special. Met Ted and Fran off a houseboat that were travelling through, and later at the pub, shared their stories of the Kimberleys.

1 September - Dungeness to Haycock Island

Up at 0600 planning to get to the wharf and fill water before Tat2 wake. But they are getting prepared too, so we let them go first. It was 0830 before we were clear of the wharf. Motored out the channel and then sailed under genoa up the Hinchinbrook, passing Katmando on the way south.

Anchored under Haycock by 1130.

Sundowners on SBZ.

18°28.199S 146°13.194E Total 1621NM

2 September - Haycock to Gayundah Creek

Only planning to move down the channel this morning, so it was a leisurely start.

Noticed a croc swimming across the channel this morning at about 0800. Passed just under the bows of Tat2, and called Mark on phone to tell him to look. It moved on to Haycock Island before going under and not being seen again.

Picked up our two traps from the bow of the boat, and motored on up the channel on one motor. The starboard motor will not run at less than 2000rpm, and Tat2 were moving even slower. We tried stopping for a cuppa and sailing in the calm for half an hour to let them get away, but we still caught them well south of Gayundah. Motored on up the channel and dropped one of the traps.

Went over to Tat2 for sundowners.

18°22.224S 146°12.291E

3 September - Gayundah to Unnamed Creek (Raft Creek)

Again, early croc. First laying next to our crab trap buoy, then swimming up and down past the buoy and diving around the trap. Then he moved up the creek and started checking Mark's traps, prompting him to move and pick up the traps before they get damaged.

We stayed on another half hour, then picked up our trap and motored out the creek. We unfurled the genoa to sail across the channel and into the unnamed creek on the west, with the aim of becoming acquainted in case of a cyclone.

Motored to the top of the creek, where the 8m depths quickly became less than 2m (at the top of the tide). Mark anchored, and we rafted alongside.

Thawed and cooked Birgit's big estuary cod for a shared lunch.

Fishing in the PM, followed by sundowners on Tat2 before we dropped off the raft and anchored for the night.

Raft position 18°23.222S 146°09.889S

Today's trip was just under an hour, travelling 3NM.

4 September - Raft Creek to Dunk Island

Tat2 were away at 0800. We waited till 0830, lifted the traps and motored out the creek. At 0900 we started hoisting sail and reaching down the channel heading for Cardwell.

Around 1100, Mark radioed to discuss, and we decided it was too rough to anchor off and dinghy into Cardwell, so we set course for Dunk Island. Tat2 running under spinnaker gybed, and we stood on longer while we were still a mile behind. Once gybing, Tat2 seemed to be getting away from us.

Soon after clearing the channel and turning to the north, we lost the wind altogether. Running the starboard motor at 2000, we started lunch, and soon had a NE breeze filling in before lunch was half ready, so the sails were back up and we were away, sailing in wind mode at 50°. Gradually the wind lifted and we could soon free the sails and change back to sailing the course. Tat2 were sailing under genoa alone, and we were catching them fast. Caught them just before Dunk, when we then started getting the sails down and motoring around to get the anchor down. Many bombies offshore to the east of the jetty. Ended up well out in 4m of water.

17°55.904S 146°08.250E

Sailed 30.9NM in 5:52 at 5.3 (8.7 max) for a 1631 total.

8 September - Dunk Island to Mourilyan

Fresh SE wind was dropping. Seas were rough at first but flattened off as the day went on. Past through a brown tide coming past South Barnard Islands.

Anchored at 17°36.193'S 146°07.365'S after 3:50 over 23.1NM at 6.0kt and max 9.5kt.

10 September - Mourilyan to Innisfail

After looking at the transport options from Mourilyan into Innisfail, we decided to head around to the Johnstone River. We were low on food from having been out at Hinchinbrook and Dunk for so long, and needed to get to the shops soon.

Left Mourilyan at around 1500 with the tide flooding and about 2 hours from the top, planning to get to the Flyingfish Point while it was still coming in.

While sailing along with Tat2 motoring, we set course for what should have been the Fairway buoy off the heads, only to find that not only was there no Fairway buoy, but the first port hand mark on the way in was missing too. We sailed well past to the north just checking that the buoy had not been moved, and then went back and followed the channel in using the marks on the chart plotter. It seems that the bar inside Flyingfish Point is relatively flat, with no marked channel and no sandbars. Once inside the bar, Tat2 continued motoring slowly. In fact too slowly for us, as the 15 would not idle, so we had to pass them and lead them up the river. Motored around and anchored first opposite the park up stream of the river junction at 17°31.364'S 146°02.027'E.

Sailed and motored for 2:23 at avg 4.6 and max 6.7 over 11.0NM.

The next day, we moved to 17°31.534'S 146°02.310'E when we realised how shallow it can become at low tide.

15 September - Innisfail to Howie Reef

After a few days of shopping and sightseeing, and with a suitable weather forecast for the next week, we were ready to head for the reef.

Up before sunrise and motoring down and out the river in the early morning calm, we followed Tat2 and backtracked our course on the way in. At sea we continued motoring with the winds light and right on the nose. After a couple of hours we tried sailing, but the winds kept veering so that we seemed to be constantly downwind of our intended destination. We were just not meant to get to Howie Reef. We should have simply altered course and sailed off to Flora, but this was our first approach of a reef, and we were a bit nervous about this. In the end, we had to furl sails and motor in the last couple of miles.

Came to anchor downwind of the reef. As the tide went out, we went for a row around to explore the sandy patch that we could see in over the edge of the reef.

Back on board, had a go at fishing. The line had no longer hit the water and it had a large shark on. After fighting it for about 10 minutes, it was along side and rather than landing it, I snapped off the hook. Quickly rerigged and back in the water, and the line was again off immediately. This time it was a large Spanish Mackerel that took quite some time to get alongside, as it ran and sounded so many times that we were all totally exhausted by the time it came on board.

We had a small feed off the fish and headed over to Tat2 for drinks.

Anchored at 17°24.130'S 146°22.094'E after 6 hours for the 26.2nm, avg 4.4 max 6.6.

16 September - Howie to Flora Reef

Tat2 headed north to go fishing. We didn't feel well so headed west then north on our way to Flora. Had a lovely fresh sail up into the reef and came to anchor in the same pond of sand that Reflection had given us the coordinates to. Anchored at 17°11.342'S 146°16.999'E. Doug's co-ords for this spot were 17°11.359S 146°17'E.

Travelled 3:24 at avg 4.6kt and max 6.8kt over 15.5NM.

17 September - Flora to Sudbury Cay

Really suffering badly now from ciguatera. Nice slow sail around the bottom of the reef to anchor at 16°57.366'S 146°08.884'E.

Travelled 4:34 at avg 3.8kt max 5.8kt over 17.4NM.

19 September - Sudbury to Moore Reef

Difficult sail with our illness. Left late to arrive at Moore in time to see reefs in the afternoon. We were able to pick up waypoints on the approach to Moore from the AIS on the departing tourist boat, and then had to use SASplanet and GE satellite photos to pick our way through to 16°51.663'S 146°13.956'E.

Travelled 2:38 at avg 3.8kt and max 6.1kt over 10.1NM. Trip total now 1706NM.

20 September - Moore to Vlasoff Cay

Again very light conditions, so we started motoring, after a while were able to set sail and reduce engine RPM and then later shut down the motor all along Arlington Reef. Motored up through the channel and approached Vlasoff from the south. We found a good hole at 16°39.625'S 145°59.396'E.

Travelled 5:27 at avg 4.3kt and max 8.2kt over 23.2NM. Journey total now 1729NM.

23 September - Vlasoff to Michaelmas Cay

Motored and sailed the short distance across to Michaelmas in the afternoon. Found a nice sandy patch to the NE of the cay and anchored at 16°39.625S 145°59.396E.

Travelled 1:04 at 4.3 knots and max 5.7 over 4.5NM total now 1734NM.

Went over to Tat2 in the evening for drinks and footy.

25 September - Michaelmas to Vlasoff Cay

Motored and sailed the short distance back to Vlasoff in the afternoon. Found a sandy hole in the reef on the NE of the cay this time.

Anchored at 16°39.177'S 145°59.485'S after 1:03 at 3.9kt 6.3 max over 4NM for total 1738.

27 September - Vlasoff to Cairns

After a morning walk on the beach at low tide, and a chat with Catina, Amaris and Starship we headed for Cairns. With wind in the south, we started sailing, expecting to have to furl up and motor through the passage at the end of Arlington Reef, but were able to point up enough to use the tide and sail right through. The wind continued to freshen all afternoon, and we had quite a boisterous sail right up into Trinity Inlet where we anchored for the night.

16°55.116'E 145°47.239' after 3:30 at 6.1kt and 9.6 max over 21.2NM for total 1759NM.

28 September - Trinity Inlet to Marlin Marina

Motored over to the marina to have the autopilot inspected.

Dealt with Grant and offsider Daniel at Marlin Marine in Cairns on (07)4052-3866 for repair to faulty DD15 autopilot SN#21119896AA793.

30 September - Marlin Marina to Trinity Inlet

Moved back out to the inlet at anchor. On the afternoon of 3 October, we returned to the boat to find a nearby mooring had been picked up, so moved anchor out to the opening of the inlet in preparation to leave.

4 October - Cairns to Pt Douglas

We had arranged with Mark off Tat2 to make an early start, and call past Double Island to pick them up on the way north. But our early start was met with no wind. It was dead calm still at 0800 when we started motoring out. Given our late start, Tat2 left their anchorage too. It was still calm when we turned north and started up the coast towards Double Island. We noticed wind out to sea, so motored out until we had

enough SE breeze to start sailing. The breeze picked up and the day heated, and was light all day.

As a result, it was a slow passage, and we had to dodge the day boats returning as we entered the creek and made our way up to an anchorage. The first turn of the creek was full of moorings, and so we ended up right up Packers Creek, just off the first creek on the west.

6 October - Pt Douglas to Low Isles

Huge cleanup job was required in the cockpit this morning. There were kilos of dead midges stuck all through the cockpit as a result of having the lights on last night.

Slow breakfast, and it was 1100 before we lifted anchor to move out. Set a double reef in the main before lifting the anchor. Forecast 25 knots observed at Low Isles, but hoped for genoa and double reef. Motored down the river on both motors and out past the channel markers.

Strong wind was more on the nose than anticipated. It looked like 45-60 degrees, so we opted for the staysail instead of the genoa. Good move, as it was really rough. Mainly beam on, the waves would have exceeded 3m and the ocean was very white. We were able to beat up into the waves and wind at reasonable speed, and the crossing only took about 90 minutes. Tough work without the autopilot. Dropped the staysail under the lee of the islands, luffed up and put away the main, and then motored in to the lagoon; right up behind Tat2 and then dropped back on anchor. In about 6m of water, we have about 40m of chain and bridle out.

Low Isles 16°22.922'S 145°33.818'E

2:10 elapsed avg 4.9 max 7.2 over 10.6nm total 1744nm

9 October - Low Is to Cooktown

Up at 0630 to head for Hope Islands. U4ria and Stargazer had already left (they had said they would go at first light).

Somewhere motored off to the north, and then Exhale headed south.

Up anchor and then motor off at 0730.

0830 we were 32.2 from the waypoint off Hope Islands. At 0940 25.8, 1030 20.9, 1130 14.5, 1200 11.0, 1230 7.0, and then we altered course for Cooktown. Covered 16nm between 1300 and 1500. Sailed wing and wing before a freshening SE breeze that turned into a wind north of Walker Bay. We had the main prevented and the genoa on the pole, and soon found this to be a bit tricky without the autopilot to assist with getting it all down. Surfing at over 10 knots at times.

Cooktown 1630 at 15°27.667S 145°14.729E, having sailed for 9:05 hours at avg 6.7 max 14.9 for 61.2nm total 1806.

11 October - Cooktown to Cape Bedford

Early walk to Grassy Hill Lookout with Mark and Janelle, before shopping and collecting mangoes and then back for lunch before leaving.

ATO phone with ref #1013106279219

Motored out the entrance and unfurled everything in a light SE breeze. We stayed high in case of a later wind shift while Tat2 sailed straight on to Bedford. Around the headland and then motored in to anchored at 15°14.634S 145°19.377E

4:00 at 4.7/6.7 over 18.9 total 1824

12 October - Cape Bedford to Cape Flattery

Woke to a calm day. Motored out into a gentle breeze that gave us some sailing and some motorsailing before dropping entirely again. Stopped at Low Wooded Island. Walked around the island with Tat2. Sailed on to Cape Flattery after lunch.

Total Distance 1844nm.

13 October - Cape Flattery to Lizard Island

Early walk on beach. Discussed options for destinations, and ended up deciding to go direct to Lizard. Easy sail in 10-15SE.

Anchor at 14°39.8S 145°27.1E for 19 days. Total distance 1864nm.

1 November - Lizard Island to Walker Bay

We've been watching the weather for weeks hoping for something favourable to head south, and today was the one that was forecast. The wind was meant to drop overnight, but blew hard and through the night assumed we would be staying another day, or maybe leave late.

Up at 5:30 and people were going and gone, and the wind had dropped considerably. Stu from SeaFox2 said that Cape Flattery was blowing 8 knots, so we put away all the last minute items and were under way by 0630. Motored out to the resort and under sail with genoa and main. Winds were gusting to 18 knots true the seas were bumpy, but the forecast predicted that it would decrease both through the day and further south. At first we were making easy 7 or 8 knots, but by 1100 we were just passing Low Woody Island with less than 10 knots of wind and about 5 knots boatspeed. Had to harden up to pass Cape Bedford, and in the end we ran the 15 motor for about 45 minutes to get through the sloppy seas close in to the rocks as we lunched on left over curry.

Afterwards the wind freed and Birgit slept as we crossed the bay past Cooktown, inside the reef and dropped sails out off Cape Walker. Motored into the sun through passage into Walker Bay. Passage coords are 15°32.854S 145°18.211E outside and 15°32.996S 145°17.938E inside.

Anchored between Tat2 and U4IA at 15°33.112S 145°17.646E

Travelled 55.5nm in 10:20 at 5.4 with 8.0max and total 1920nm.

2 November - Walker Bay to Hope Island

Up at first light, and quickly under way, with a light land breeze in the early morning. Once clear of Walker Bay and then sun came up, the wind dropped, and we were soon motoring with just the main, and the wind so contrary that we could just sheet in the

sail and allow that to keep us pointing straight into the light breeze and right on course for Hope Island.

We wanted to make Low Islands tonight, but with the winds, we would have had to motor all the way, so stopped off at Hope Island for a morning cuppa, hoping for some favourable breeze. But none came, and we stayed the night, only to find the forecast for tomorrow even less favourable.

Had a couple of walks on the island. Found it to be surrounded by huge schools of bait fish. Netted a container of hard heads in the afternoon. Found the carcass of a couple of turtles on the east side of the island.

Total Distance 1935nm

3 November - Hope Island to Low Islands

Away early again, but the winds were too much in the south to be able to sail for Cape Tribulation. We sailed fast at first, but once close to land, had to motor sail in order to stay high enough to clear the cape.

Once past the Cape, the weather changed, and we furled the genoa and motored straight out for a couple of miles before being able to bear away and sail for Low Isles.

Tat2 stopped at Snapper Island for lunch, and then motored over to Low in the afternoon. We went to visit them, as they intended to go to Port Douglas tomorrow.

News from Markwell Marine was that the replacement autopilot had been dispatched from Melbourne, and would be delivered tomorrow.

Total Distance 1975nm.

4 November - Low Islands to Cairns

Up early, and again the wind had too much south to clear the headlands to the south.

Again, we sailed as we could, which put us on the coast about 10 miles north of Double Island. Once close to the coast, we motorsailed high, and as we went south, the mountains bent to winds east, allowing us to motorsail right up into the gap inside Double Island. Through the gap we furled the genoa and pointed higher, but soon were able to turn off the motor and sail all the way into Cairns.

Took the dinghy to shore for a walk around, but the autopilot was not delivered as promised.

Total Distance 2015nm.

6 November - Trinity Inlet to Marlin Marina

Came into the marina, and had a trip off to the markets.

7 November - Marlin Marina

I was up early for a bike ride for fuel. Filled one boat tank and the 20 and 10l containers, and then a shopping trip to Woolies. Back on board, we had a breakfast on electricity, turned up the charger, filled the tanks and washed the decks, planning to be away from the marina by 1000.

Rang Grant at Markwell Marine, and he had only just picked

8 November - Marlin Marine to Trinity Inlet

Rode out to Deckstore and bought 1.25m of 10mm 316 short link chain. Back at the boat, connected it up to the anchor. Refilled tanks and batteries, and we were away from the marina at around 1015.

Anchored at 16°55.095S 145°47.189E in 5m with 35m of chain.

10 November - Cairns to Mourilyan

Forecast was for early calms again, so we had planned to go to Rusty's Markets again before leaving. Dinghy into Marlin and walked up to Rusty's. Markets still getting set up, and there was not a lot to choose from. On to Woolies by 0800 for some last groceries, and then back to the boat.

Up anchor at 0900 in calm conditions. Motored out the inlet with ebb tide, and had the main up as we came past Yarabah with about 3 knots TWS and about 7 knots AWS. The breeze continues to fill in and shift north and we soon had the genoa out and the motor idled back.

Around 1100 we were off Cape Grafton and still motor-sailing.

Around 1145 we turned off the motor but speed was back to less than 3 knots. As we came around the corner past Turtle Bay, we furled the genoa and rigged up the spinnaker.

At 1200 we had the spinnaker filling in about 7-10 knots TWS and the autopilot steering us at 105 AWA, sitting on around 6-7 knots. By 1230 the wind had shifted back to the east and the spinnaker is driving us in toward the coast.

1430 and we were just inside High Island. Continued on under spinnaker all the way to the Mourilyan, with the wind angle between 90 apparent and dead downwind. Had some gusts to 13 knots TWS which had us surfing regularly into the 9s, and a couple at over 10.

Sails down at 1830, just after sunset, and motored into the harbour.

Anchored at 17°36.212S 146°07.417E having been on the move 9:50 hours at an avg 5.8, max 11.2 for 57.4NM (total 2075NM).

11 November - Mourilyan to Little Pioneer Bay

Alarm set at 0430, but there was no wind, so back to bed. Up again at 0530, and anchor up by 0600.

Very joggly sea outside the heads and didn't really smooth off until clear of Kent Island. No wind.

Motored until 0900, when we were getting consistent 5knots with gusts to 7 from the north. Tried main and genoa motorsailing, but the apparent wind went to nothing with the motor, so furled the genoa and got out the spinnaker again. Spinnaker worked ok with the main while we were above 160, so we headed out to sea a bit looking for wind

before dousing the main and running DDW with spinnaker alone. We were making only around 4 knots, and at times much less.

Around noon the wind was a bit stronger, but we still had not see TWS above 10 knots. Continued on track direct for Little Pioneer, but at noon it was still 35nm to go and our average was less than 4, so it seemed that we would not make it before dark, even if the wind picked up. Still by 1500 I was looking at alternatives, like maybe Zoe North Creek (favourable tides with highs at sunrise/set).

Around 1500 the wind started increasing, giving some gusts up to 12 knots, and we were suddenly averaging better than 6, so Pioneer Bay was again possible. Pushed on with the increasing wind, getting some surfing at up to 9 knots, with the wind right up to near 20 as we approached Orpheus Island.

Coming past Pelorus, we considered pushing on to Zuno Bay, but as we came past Pioneer, we noticed a big storm building over the mainland, and that the moorings were vacant in at Little Pioneer, so made a hasty left turn and picked up the middle bouy (again) at 1830.

Had the autopilot throwing Rudder Response Failure errors all day. Checked online and it looks like I should repeat the installation commissioning again. I'll try that before ripping out the wiring again.

Just as we approached the bay, the Zeus MFD locked up, and then rebooted. Lost the daily run totals. I reckon we did 65nm in 12:30 at a 5knot average with 9 knot max. Total Distance 2140nm.

On mooring at 18°35.722E 146°29.261S.

12 November - Little Pioneer to Cape Bowling Green

Under way at 0530. Winds fresh, so set a reef in the main. Tried a recalibration on the autopilot, but conditions were very choppy, so it was unlikely to be a good setting.

By the bottom of Orpheus Island, the wind had already eased so much that I threw out the reef. There was a monohull becalmed in Juno Bay, so we stayed wide and headed across to Steamer Passage with light winds and occasional motor assistance. Under the lee of Great Palm Island, we lost the wind altogether, and ended up having to motor out to the NE where we could see wind.

The wind there was at first up to 20 knots, and on the beam, and se were screaming away to the SE. As the forecast was for the winds to both freshen and move to the east in the afternoon, we stay well out to sea to stay up on the line.

The winds eased through the day instead of freshening, and early afternoon were down to well under 10 knots and we were making only 4 or 5. We had sufficient room to leeward, so again tried the spinnaker. Spinnaker gave us double speed, and were screaming away to the SE, just below the line to CBG.

We arrived about a mile to the west of the tip, but given the dynamic nature of the landform, I wouldn't want to have been any closer yet anyway. We did however have a jamb with the spinnaker retrieval; the sock sticking and only allowing the top half of the sail to furl. I needed Birgit's assistance to drop the halyard and retrieve the sail, as we were bearing down into the bay and the shallow mud banks at top speed.

Motored around and into the lee of the cape, finding the bottom flat with about 4.5m depth at the half tide. We were able to get right up under the lee of the cape, in line with the first vegetation, and anchored in a gutter close to shore with about 6m depth.

Cleaned up the sails and went for a walk on the cape. Sand was very muddy, but found some yabby holes in a gutter along the ocean side of the spit. The water looked active with fish, but caught nothing when I tried it later.

Had a big storm build up out the west at sunset. Lightning everywhere, but by dark it seemed that it was going south of us. I brought up the bridle, and put out extra anchor chain; about 50m all up. About 2100 it began to rain, with the northern edge of the storm passing over us as it moved east. This brought strong SW winds through the early evening, raising quite a chop at the anchorage.

19°18.308S 147°23.111E

Travelled for 11:30 at avg 6.1kt and max 10.5kt over 70.1nm. Total Distance 2210nm.

13 November - Cape Bowling Green to Bowen

Started to lift the anchor at 0530, but so much chain, and so much mud, so we weren't under way until 0545. Motored out around the point, got up the main, but with no wind, continued motoring until 0630. Tried sailing for a while. Changed up to spinnaker. Early NW wind dropped altogether, so back to motoring.

Around 1100 the wind starting coming back in from the N. Motored out to the east towards wind on the water, and soon had the spinnaker up again.

At 1300, we were at 19°31.099S 147°49.707E, making better than 6 knots before a 12 knot northerly pushing 6 knots over the deck. We've come 31 miles with 36 to go to Horseshoe Bay.

At 1515, 19°40.124S 148°01.976E 21.6NM to Horseshoe Bay, having come 45.5NM. 9.2 max. But as the afternoon wore on, the winds kept increasing, with many gusts well above the 15 knot forecast. Several had gone to 20 knots, and at times it was a consistent 18kt TWS. The boat was surfing every wave at up to 0 knots, and at times a larger wave would pick us up while we were already surfing and push us on at 15kt for a sustained period.

At 1730 we had covered 62.9NM. So in 2¼ hours we covered 17.4 or 7.7 average. I am surprised it was only that, because I am sure we would have covered more than 10nm in the last hour before the spin came down.

Sailed under spinnaker until 1745, and then ripped the sock getting it down. Genoa out and continued on, still making up to 10 knots under genoa and main. Birgit steered us up into Bowen under the full moon while I adjusted sails and navigated.

Came around into the harbour and anchored off the basin at 20°01.515S 148°15.646E in 5.5m. Sailed for 13 hours over 73.5nm at avg 5.6 and max 15.4 is the all time fastest.

Total Distance 2284nm.

14 November - Bowen to Nara Inlet

Another early start. Anchor up at 0530. Calm conditions. Mooring buoys all around our anchor.

Motored back out around Stone Island and set course for Gloucester Passage. Early winds gave hope of a sail, but soon dropped off to nothing again. Motored all the way to the passage, and half way through a strong westerly breeze came up. Sailed out of the passage and around the north of Saddleback Island. Winds faded as we sailed on to Armit, and then had to motor all the way across to Nara.

With the full moon tonight, the tides were big. Flood tide across Edgumbe Bay flowed into the bay to the SW, assisted us through Gloucester Passage, but soon after Armit, the ebb tide was holding us back. Coming into Nara, the current around the headland must have been running at around 3 knots.

Anchored in Refuge Bay Nara at 20°08.743S 148°54.222E after 8:30 hours, covering 40.7NM at avg of 4.8 and max 8.5. Total Distance 2325nm.

17 November - Nara Inlet

Moved from Refuge Bay to the northern end of the inlet. East winds were getting right up into Refuge and backing us up close to the reef. Had a walk up to the cave painting. Anchor dragged on the flooding tide.

18 November - Nara Inlet to Airlie Beach

Left Nara with the wind quite east, and forecast at 15-20. But as we came out of Nara with a reefed main and genoa we had some gusts well over 25. We pushed south for about 15 minutes, heading for Cid Island, before deciding that it was too rough and bearing away to sail down to Airlie.

Through the reef out as we crossed the passage, and continued on, right into the Port of Airlie channel.

Broke the fuel line fitting on the stb motor while lifting the tank out.

20 November - Airlie Beach to Cannonvale

Fitted new fuel primer bulb and fuel stop cock on stb motor.

After going for a walk and Woolies shopping, we moved around to Cannonvale so as to be ready for the sailmaker first thing on Monday morning.

Total Distance 2345nm.

23 November - Cannonvale to Shaw Island

Forecast was for light winds early, filling in from the SE and shifting to the NE.

We did the washing before going for a walk around to Sorrento, just for the stretch.

Back on board the breeze had just begun, so quickly prepared for sail and motored out of the moorings. Sail up and close hauled with autopilot on stb tack. Prepared and ate lunch while we came out around Pioneer Rocks. The further out we went, the more the wind came around to the south, probably because of the land influence at the point. But once out in the channel when we were to the north of North Molle Island, the wind

starting backing to the north, and we soon tacked away to the south. I'd been hoping to get to Whitehaven, but we were pointing straight down the channel with a flood tide and good wind, so decided to make our destination Shaw Island.

Going in around Henning and Dent Island and up the channel to the west of Hamilton Island, we came out of the wind and had to use the motor to assist with the tide.

Once clear of Hamo, the wind was again fair, and we sailed across on a close reach at about 45° AWA at around 6 knots.

Anchored at 20°30.215S 149°03.003E in about 10m after 6:20 hours having covered 32.2NM at 5.1 and max 8.8. Total Distance 2377nm.

24 November - Shaw Island to Goldsmith Island

Up and 0430 and under way almost immediately. Flood tide was sweeping down the inside of Shaw and out around Burning Point. The water was so smooth we could see the current sweeping around the end of the island so we rode that advantage, coming past the end of the island very very close.

Then motored all the way, with winds rarely making as much as 5 knots.

Anchored up at 20°41.157S 149°08.821E with two anchors and a line ashore. Travelled for 3:05 hours at 4.5 for the 13.8NM. Max speed of 5.9 was seen coming around the corner of Burning Point in the tide. Total Distance 2391nm.

Moved to a better position closer to the shore with the stern in against the mangroves, with hard packed sand and no mud under foot and less depth providing more time dry.

We tied put the anchor out in the middle of the creek and backed into the sandy beach. The danforth was put into the mangroves with 5m of chain and 12mm nylon rope on the port quarter, and the 4k bruce out of the dinghy went on the stb quarter. Additional lines of 8mm nylon went into the mangroves and tied off on the aft cleats. All was well until the night of Saturday 26th. The tide was high around midnight, so the boat was floating from about 9pm. Around 2200 a storm blew in, and in a couple of minutes, all the 8mm nylon lines snapped one after the other. The wind was blowing straight up the creek, and the little amount of chain on the danforth wouldn't hold the stern in to the shore. Even worse, as the stern swung around, the anchor line went under the boat and around a rudder. We were now only metres from the rocks on the other side of the creek, and with broken rope floating around everywhere we couldn't start the motors before it was all tidied up. After the broken ropes were recovered, we found that now that the danforth had bit in and could not be budged in the wind, so I dropped the shackle off the end of the chain and left the anchor behind to be recovered tomorrow. In the black of the night, with the wind gusting 35 knots blowing us onto a lee shore, turning the boat into the wind to winch in the anchor required full power forward and reverse. Finally, by 2300 we had the anchor up and were able to motor out of the bay and anchor in 10m with about 50m chain out. It was a rough night with the wind waves coming around the point and side on to the boat sitting at anchor. After sitting on watch for an hour, I set the anchor alarm and went to bed. Next morning, cleaned up the mess, moved in closer till the tide came right up, and then reset ourselves on the shore again.

Whilst at Goldsmith, we painted the antifoul and lifted the boot topping, varnished the rubrail, changed the oil in the outboards and re-calibrated the anchor chain.

1 December - Goldsmith Island to Hunter Island

Moved out of the creek on the high tide on the evening 30 November. Brought in all lines at the low tide in the PM, and were ready to leave as soon as we floated, which occurred at around 2200. Moved out in the star light, anchoring and then fishing for a while before bed.

Alarm set for 0430. Ready quickly and anchor was up and we were under way at 0450. Good flood tide advantage. Nice run along close to Goldsmith, with light NW that moved NE and E before going W and dropping all together.

At 0800 we were between Brampton and St Bees at 20°53.613' 149°16.941' on a glassy sea.

0930 at 21°00.000S 149°21.000E. Back to motoring again on a glassy sea after sailing for an hour with a fresh SW breeze.

1100 at 21°06.941S 149°24.933E. Still glassy. Still motoring, but now with sails up. Light NE assisting, giving us an extra half knot. Approaching the roadstead off Hay Point.

1400 at 21°17.969S 149°33.887E with fresh NE breeze. Had the spinnaker up for an hour now. AWS is less than 8 knots and we're covering ground at around 5.5k. With the boat speed paddlewheel not working, it's hard to get a measure of the speed through water.

1730 at Curlew Island. Motored around west to south side, but was spooked by the foul looking rocks on the foreshore. I just had a bad feeling about anchoring there, so packed up and headed on, with Hunter Island in mind. It was well after 1900 when we left, and soon dark.

Once dark, Birgit went and laid down. We sailed on with the tide carrying us south and the wind at 1-15 knots at 90° AWA on port tack. We screamed along, and made good time across to Hunter. Dropped sail when we were a couple of miles off the Lola Mantes Channel, and then motored through with both motors running as slow as was comfortable. Birgit was watching in the star light while I followed our earlier track, from when we were here on the way north. Found another boat anchored off the southern end of Hunter, so we anchored well out.

2015 at 21°43.392S 149°56.799E sailing at 7.5 in 13k NE wind. Been travelling 15:05 to cover 82nm so far today. Reported avg 5.4 and max 9.7k.

Anchored at Hunter Island at 2400. Total Distance 2473nm.

2 December - Hunter to Great Keppel Island

Again heading south. With high tide at noon in Mackay, we have contrary tides for heading along the coast. That is, to head for Cape Townsend would be into the flood. Instead, we are going to try to head down into Shoalwater Bay and then take the ebb tide back out Strong Tide Passage.

We found that the flood tide current running to the west was as fast as we could sail in the light northerly breeze. We had to bear away across the current to make any southing, and so ended up quite close in to Thirsty Sound. Once in the entrance to Shoalwater Bay, it was clear that we had to hurry on in order to make it down to Strong Tide Passage before the change of tide, so motorsailed most of the way across. For the last couple of hours, running down past Canoe Passage, the wind had freshened, and so we were back to sailing, and at time very fast on the flat water.

At noon, we had a lunch of reheated dhal with a fresh pea and potato curry just as we arrived at the entrance to the channel. We were able to sail the first part of the passage, but where the channel started to funnel down and the ebb tide current increased, the winds were suddenly so fresh and right on the nose. The winds must have been reacting to the water surface and current, and the whole passage was lively with white water. Birgit spotted a line of white water across the eastern opening, but I thought I could see a gap which would have been the deep water. But as we approached, with the tide throwing us out at 10 knots and more, it seemed that we would have to cross over what the chartplotter showed to be a very shallow patch in order to get south to the gap in the breakers. Instead, it seemed safer to just nose into the cauldron of white water, and by running the motors slowly to maintain steerage and control, we let the tide flush us out, at around 1400.

Once out, there was Island Head beside us, and those beaches that we had been walking along only a few months ago. Logic, the big 15m cat we had seen at Cairns and Lizard, was reaching south, and we were almost on collision course at Island Head as we were close hauled with genoa and main. Maybe he was annoyed that we had dragged him off after all the bragging about his boat being a speed machine. But anyway, he furled his sails and motored off to the south, while we continued on east and rigged up the spinnaker. It was 1500 by the time we had the spinnaker up and heading south, and our choices were a short run to Port Clinton, or into the night to Great Keppel Island.

Ran under spinnaker all afternoon. The winds were so fresh that we were making great speed, so we decided to push on. The winds were around to 145°, so we had to rig the pole on the spinnaker to keep it filling behind the main. With the autopilot refusing to operate at all now, Birgit steered through the afternoon, and had us to Cape Manifold by 1730.

At 1830, sunset had us decide to lower the spinnaker, and soon we were running again at speeds over 10 knots in the dark with the sails wing and wing on stb tack, struggling to keep west enough to clear the islands. When we were about 10 miles north of North Keppel, we realised that I had put a bad course into the chart, and it would have taken us over shallow foul ground. We had to go further west, and that meant coming right up to 140° on stb tack, and then, with the increased apparent wind, and a freshening breeze, it was becoming uncontrollable and required a reef in the main. Once reefed, Birgit was able to steer while I repaired our course.

Birgit sat up at the helm all night, reading me the navigation numbers and wind speed and direction while I steered us on to Long Beach on Great Keppel. Without the paddlewheel operating, we didn't have a true wind speed, but as we were travelling at 10 and the AWS was 15, we knew it was fresh. We arrived to find a whole village of boats already anchored, and so we slowly pushed up in the winds, now showing 25-30 knot AWA, and anchored outside everyone in 10m of water with all our chain out.

Anchored at 23°11.800S 150°57.031E after 16:50 hours having covered 107.6NM at avg 6.4 and max 11.9. That max must have been during the evening before the reef went in. Total Distance 2581nm.

3 December - Great Keppel Island to Pancake Creek

Slept in this morning. Up at 0800 and had a slow breakfast, and then started to repair a few things. Found that the pushrod between the DD15 and Rudder Feedback was bent. Investigation showed that the drag link between the DD15 and the tiller head was incorrectly installed when I put it all back together in Cairns. Took it all apart again, refitted, recalibrated, and all test ok.

It was 1100 before we had the anchor up and under way, but found the autopilot completely inoperable, even in NFU mode. Stopped the motors to drift while everything was checked and rechecked. Eventually, powering off the entire network seemed to fix it. So again under way, and we were soon close on the wind, heading SE.

Across to Cape Capricorn, following the cat True Magic, we were both on a very close reach, with winds over the deck at 10-12 knots and 45° AWA, making around 8 knots SOG. Because I had neglected to check the paddle wheel, we had no boatspeed and hence no true wind measures.

As we approached Cape Capricorn we had a lunch of hot bread and ham salad, before we were able to bear away another 10°, which brought the waves around to the stern enough that we were surfing along them.

And we surfed along them all afternoon, with high speed bursts well into the 10s. I noticed that the autopilot drive unit was actually loose, and the unit moved each time the pilot altered course.

Anchored at 24°01.970S 151°49.509E after 8:00 hours over 67.8NM at avg 8.0 and max 12.4. That avg is distorted low due to the long time between starting to raise that anchor, getting the autopilot to work and calibrated before we were actually under way. Recalculating the distance over 7.5 hours gives an avg of over 9 knots.

After dinner, I took out and freed the paddlewheel on the through hull transducer, and removed the panel from behind the washing machine to tighten up the autopilot.

Total Distance 2649nm.

4 December 2016 - Pancake Creek to Burnett Heads

Storm front passed through in the middle of the night. Up at 0300 checking conditions. Wind against tide created some noise that kept us both awake. The tide was high and just dropping, and the wind howling in from the NE.

Up at 0520. Slack water low tide and no wind. Went ashore in the dinghy with the view to catch some yabbies and whiting. But the sand proved too muddy and the tide too low for the pump to work. Walked around for a while, found a pippi on the beach, and fruitlessly used that as a bait on the way back to SBZ.

On board and immediately up anchor and under way by 0635. Crossed the entrance at 0705, and motored on to beyond Inner Rocks at 0800 when we put the spinnaker up,

before having a breakfast. Nice close reach with the autopilot in wind mode at 100° and running a course slightly east of the 130° that will take us clear of Round Hill and on the Bundaberg.

At 0915, we were at 24°06.155S 151°52.815E making 6 knots in 10 knot TWS. Birgit and Bess both having a snooze after breakfast.

Breeze held in all day, freshening the afternoon, with gusts up to 18TWS. Held the spinnaker all day, staying a little outside the direct route, to give us some wriggle room in case of a wind shift later. It was a consistently fast run all afternoon, catching up to a large (maybe 46') sloop that had been in Pancake Creek last night that had left before I was up this morning. We dropped the spinnaker 1 mile short of the shipping channel, as we came alongside the sloop, and were then maintaining the same speed as them with just our main.

Motored up the rough channel against the ebb tide with both motors, and then dropped anchor outside the breakwater between the boat harbour and the marina.

Rang Catina, who were in the marina, and discussed the weather and plans, and decided to head for Fraser Island tomorrow morning at 0500, planning to get somewhere south of the shallow water in the GSS.

Anchored at 24°45.427S 152°23.698E after 9:40 hours, having covered 64.5nm at 6.7 avg and 12.4 max. Total Distance 2714nm.

5 December - Burnett Heads to Inskip Point

Alarm set for 0430 and were ready to go at 0500 when Do-It and Catina came past in the river. We had the main up before the anchor, and only motored for a moment before the genoa was out too. The light NWEr was fresh enough to sail out the channel, where a fourth boat, Storm Chaser, was trying to motor out and get a spinnaker ready. Catina had problems with their main, and ended up north of the river by the time we were well south and on course.

As the wind was light but shy, we tried first the staysail, but were still too slow. The objective was to get to the GSS shallows at the top of the tide, giving us tidal assistance at both ends of the channel. Catina were sailing fast once under way and soon had us overtaken. Storm Chaser was under spinnaker alone and getting about the same speed as us while Do It had a head start and were doing well under small job and main and appeared to be motoring. We soon had the headsails in and the spinnaker out, and were straight away powering away from Storm Chaser and Do It, and appeared to be catching Catina.

At the fairway buoy at the top of the GSS, we handled the spinnaker and with the wind freshening, tried to run just with genoa and main. The others motored away, and we persevered with sailing, gybing back and forth up the straights. We were an hour late for the tide in the end, running against the ebb from around Kingfisher on. With the forecast for tomorrow including a strong wind warning, it looked like tomorrow would be a day off, and we had figured that we might stop at Garrys for the night. But the wind was picking up, and suddenly we realised we had powered past the entrance to the north end of Garrys, so just kept going, deciding instead to go on to Inskip.

Do It could not get into the shallow anchorage at Inskip, so doubled back to the south end of Fraser Island. Catina were anchored inside Inskip, and we dropped anchor just to the east of them and went over for drinks.

Anchored at 25°48.951S 153°02.746E after 11:50 hours, having covered 82.8nm at 7.0 avg and 11.0 max. Total Distance 2796nm.

6 December - Inskip Point to Fraser Island

With the winds too strong, we had the day relaxing.

Spent the morning taking apart the steering and then going for some yabbies and a swim on a sand bank. After lunch, moved over to Do It and they came onto SBZ with a lamb roast in the evening.

7 December - Fraser Island to Mooloolaba

With alarm set for 0530, I was up before 0500 and getting ready. But the tide was still running hard, and as I had told others we would not be leaving before 0600, we were in no hurry to get going. There was a steady stream of other boats heading for sea. We had the anchor up and 0545 and started down the channel with the ebb tide. The only boats behind us were La Jorja and Do It. Everyone else ignored the VMR advice to wait for the change of tide.

The mad mile was pretty rough, and we stayed as far west as I dared. It appeared that the southern spit was extending well past the waypoint, and despite seeing the earlier boats on their AIS running inside the waypoint, we stayed north till the end too, and then gave it some power and speed to get out over the bar.

With very little wind, we continued on with one motor until north of Double Island Point when we got the genoa out for a short while and then switched to spinnaker. We stayed out to sea, while the others seemed to hug the coast heading for Noosa. We really had a good run, and caught a number of the big Lagoons that had left ahead of us and then motored on while we were the first to start sailing.

Again, the wind had started at nothing, and just kept increasing all afternoon. We finished just north of Mooloolaba with huge runs of surfing under spinnaker before switching down to genoa for the last couple of miles to the bar.

Off to the shops on the bike, and then over to La Jorja for dinner.

Anchored at 26°41.714S 153°07.062E after 8:12 with avg 7.7kt and max 13.2kt over 61.4NM. Total distance 2861NM.

8 December - Mooloolaba to Peel Island

With the forecast predicting morning calms turning into fresh NE-NW breezes, we were in no hurry to get going, so slept in and had a big breakfast, before heading out just after 0900.

Again the winds were light, and we used the genoa to head out to sea a bit before switching to spinnaker. Around Caloundra we headed in to the NW channel marker which was downwind, so dropped the main to give the spinnaker more wind, and once back inside the NW Channel, so got the main back up again, and carried that all along

Bribie Island. At the bottom end of the island, storms were building up everywhere, and it was going to be the end of the spinnaker for the day.

Gybing back and forth across the channel around the bottom of Bribie and over towards Newport under main and genoa, the winds were increasing, and once on course down the bay for Peel Island at 1430, the NE was gusting well over 20TWS and with the storm kicking giving us some rain we put a reef in the main. After about 30 mins the rain cleared and the wind eased, so the reef was thrown out and we continued on powering down the bay. The storms kept building and moving off, and while it seems that we would be inside one at any minute, they stayed away and we surfed on down the bay covering the 30 miles down the bay to Peel Island in the 3 hours till 1730. Rounding the bottom of the island, we dropped sail and motored up into Horseshoe Bay. Anchor down at 1800.

27°30.341S 153°21.634E Travelled 9:01 at 6.9kt with max 12.7kt over 62.4NM. Total Distance 2923.

9 December - Peel Island to Steiglitz

With only the short distance to Jacobs Well to cover in the whole day, we had a long slow breakfast before getting under way. Easy broad reach down the eastern channel and off to Lamb Island to see Paul and Lyn off SachaB. Stayed on for lunch and didn't leave until 1600.

Lamb Island anchor at 27°37.955E 153°22.503S

Motored out to the main channel, and then ghosted along with the tide until Steiglitz. Anchored at Steiglitz after 3:35 covering 17.1 at 4.8 max 7.7 with 18.8 over water. Total Distance 2942NM.

10 December - Steiglitz to North Bedroom

With the wind strong and gusty, and the channel quite confined, we motored around to Jacobs Well, at first with both motors, and later back to the 15 once we were clear of the moorings at Steiglitz.

Anchored at Jacobs Well and waiting for Isabella. She arrived around noon, we had a salad lunch with hot bread, and then sailed down to the Northern Bedroom at Jumpinpin.

Covered 5nm in 1:04, avg 4.7 and 7.3 max. Anchored 27°44.807E 153°26.272S Total Distance 2947NM.

11 December - North Bedroom to Jacobs Well

Boats everywhere, and wind on the nose, we motored all the way down to Jacobs Well against the ebb tide, getting the genoa out for most of the trip. Anchored off the boat ramp and took Isabella ashore.

Back on board for a few hours waiting for Margaret and Leif to arrive. We gave them a quick tour of the boat, and went for a short sail down the channel towards Steiglitz. Back to anchor for a cuppa, and the night. Total Distance 2952NM.

12 December - Jacobs Well to Bums Bay

Up early to make the most of the tide. But the wind was in the south, so while we were able to sail out to the main channel, down the measured mile was right on the nose and all sail had to come down. We had the sails out again twice more, but it was a motor most the way.

Found Starship and Katmando both at Bums Bay and had sundowners with everyone on Katmando, including the crew off Duet.

GPS says 13.8NM while 15.7 through the water in 2:42. Anchored at 27°56.727E 157°25.456S Total Distance 2966NM.

15 December - Bums Bay to Iluka

Alarm set for 0400 and anchor up at 0420.

Had to finish autopilot calibration with a quick autotune process after leaving, and had to cancel it the first time when it had us heading for a sandbank. Tide was low and just turned to flood.

At first the wind was very light and seas still rough from the previous day wind, so we kept motoring out at about 110° trying to pick up some wind and current with just the main up.

Soon the spinnaker was up too, and with the wind from the NW we kept heading out.

As the morning went on, the wind kept increasing and backing to the N as it strengthened, and by noon we were surfing along on every wave, with runs well above 10.

Anchored at 29°24.601S 153°20.957E, down at 1900 standard time, having covered 106nm in 14:48 for an avg of 7.2 and max 13.8. Total Distance 3072NM.

16 December - Iluka to Yamba

With no water in the tanks, we planned to go over to Yamba for the day and get a few groceries on board too. After late breakfast, we were off to Iluka for a walk, and then motored over to Yamba and took the tide up Oyster Channel. Saw Don and Liz on their pontoon boat, and they dropped in a for a visit while we were tied to the Oyster Channel pontoon. Dropped the pontoon and anchored in the river for lunch and then a shopping trip. Called in to Chris and Margaret off Twisted.

With the tide low we moved down Oyster Channel to the junction up from the Tavern, and then moved right down to Whiting Beach after sunset on the flood tide. Total Distance 3075NM.

17 December - Yamba to Wooli

Alarm set for 0500 summer time. Iluka Marine Rescue came alive at 0530 as we were about to leave, so took the time to get a bar report and log in with them before anchor up at 0540.

Tide was still gushing out, and carried us down the entrance channel as we motored north across the stream. There was a slight lift on the bar as we crossed at 0600 but no breakers, and the disturbed water continued outside the walls, so we motored SE for about 20 minutes before getting the spinnaker out and continuing with just the

spinnaker with the breeze at under 10 and from quite W of N. With the wind light and speed down I put up the main too, while running and holding the boom and leech central while carefully hoisting. As we were running square, we had the spinnaker out on the pole and the main on a preventer in order to present the largest area of sail.

The wind continued light, and it was not till around 0900 that we started to see any gusts above 10, and then it was so late and the wind still without the easterly component that I had anticipated that we were forced to gybe back in. As the spinnaker was out on the pole, and I was finding that I could sail by the lee around to about 170° without spilling the spinnaker, we tried gybing just the main as it was back winding in any case. It was found that we could carry that strange configuration with the asym spinnaker back to front with the wind between 165 and 170°. We carried that straight in towards the bar on course 210° until we were inside the bommie, and neatly furled the spinnaker and dropped the main before starting both engines and heading for the bar. With engines both running at about 3000rpm, we came in close enough to see that there was a lift on the bar but no breakers, so I opened both motors to about 4000, and immediately started picking up the waves and riding them for long distances. We picked up one wave out about 300 metres and carried it right to the bar before we dropped off, but then picked up the next wave and rode it all the way through to the wave trap.

Back at Wooli. Dad came rowing out to us as we approached the village, so we brought him on board and towed his dinghy up the river to where we anchored just up from the Bowling Club.

Covered the 33.8nm in 5:47 for an avg of 5.8 and max of 13.5. That max would have been surfing the waves on the bar, and I think the max speed under sail was about 10. Anchored at 29°51.931S 153°15.880E Total Distance 3109NM.