

# **SBZ Log**

**2017**

## **Wooli-Bowen**



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## **Early 2017**

We started the year anchor opposite the Woolli Bowling Club, but with hot weather soon decided that down river near the mouth would be a better location. We enjoyed swimming around the boat and walking to the breakwater each day, but we had no idea about when we could leave and under what circumstance. There were many jobs to complete on the boat, and that was the focus of our time at our house.

After months of uncertainty about what to do with our house at Pillar Valley, we finally have a plan. Having decided on having Ryan Hunter taking the house as a tenant, we have been busy both finishing off the incomplete features of the house and clearing our possessions out and into the shed.

Our daily routine has been to spend the day at home, baking lunch in the pizza oven before back to the boat before dark.

Lisa Hunter came to visit, and we had a huge dump of rain on the day she came and the day after, and the road to town was closed for a few days.

## **30 March, Woolli**

In the usual way, we were on our way to Pillar Valley around 0900. The weather was fine and calm but the forecast was ominous. We have been following Erica from Ovedie on Facebook, with regular updates about their struggle with Cyclone Debbie at Abel Point Marina. The cyclone has weakened to a tropical low, and after being a very slow moving cyclone, it is now moving SE very quickly, and anticipated to pass through SE Qld or the Northern Rivers NSW later today.

At Pillar, I worked more on the shower recess while Birgit prepared lunch and continued packing up rooms while the rain came in and intensified. Later I epoxied up some components for the tackle box and moved boxes into the shed. After lunch, I went off to town to get a quick load of food in case of flooding.

It had to be a quick trip to town. The rain was now heavy and relentless. On the way in, all the creeks were running full and fast, and on the highway one lane was closed by water over the road. The traffic contraflow wasted many minutes and it was clear I had to be quick or be stranded. After an hour and five stops, I was on the highway again heading for Tucabia, but soon stopped at Alipou Creek near the Bunnings levee. As I was moving along in a stream of traffic heading through the water, the RMS flagman closed the road in front of me. After 20 minutes of south bound heavy vehicles being let through the contraflow, northbound cars were turned around but they let me through in the 4x4. I picked up the bag of nets at the Tucabia store and headed home. Birgit was ready so it was a quick turnaround and back to Woolli.

In the pouring rain and failing light, I stripped to undies and went and emptied the rain water from the dinghy and got it afloat in amongst the sea grass before getting it loaded and heading for the boat. The tide was still ebbing

but must have turned to flood in the ocean already. I had to work fast while I had calm winds and suitable tide. The winds were forecast to first increase from the NE at up to 25kts before turning S at 25-40kts in the middle of the night. All we could do was to hang off the stern anchor in the evening as the tide flooded against the NE, and to be set up ready to turn around as soon as the wind changed.

### **31 March, Wooli**

At about 0140, I woke to rain and strong wind. The southerly had hit, and light rain was coming through the door. While the wind was still only 20kts, the stern anchor was struggling, so I put on the rain coat and went and put into to action the plan to drop the stern anchor. With the container of rope attached to the inflatable, and the anchor line tied off onto the painter, I simply released the stern line and let the inflatable float away as we spun around. With only the bow anchor, the tide ebbing strongly with all the rain flooding down the river, we were only getting side on to the wind and waves, and started sailing around the anchor.

The wind strengthened, and soon I was seeing 40kt gusts, and the noise prevented us from sleeping. I listened to 2NR through the night. They were broadcasting emergency information about the floods on the Tweed, Brunswick, Richmond and Wilson Rivers. Through the night, 20,000 people were ordered to evacuate from flood waters, with the water over topping the levee at Lismore and Murwillumbah.

Greg Bishop rang from Coffs at 0700 and talked for 30 mins about his trip, the current situation and Cyclone Debbie. I went back to bed and after an hour, had a call from Dad. He was being visited by the SES who were worried to see our dinghy floating in the middle of the river with no one in it. Soon after Isabella rang to check on us. By now the ebb tide and flood water had eased against the flood tide and we were at last hanging bow to wind and much more comfortable.

After breakfast, with still a couple of hours of tide to flood, the current in the river was almost stopped, so I launched PWZ to attempt to recover the anchor and inflatable. With the significant wind waves on the water, I was not confident that PWZ could lift the 20kg bruce anchor without getting swamped. The wind was gusting to 40kts, so I had to motor, and carefully eased up to the float trying to avoid fouling the outboard in the ropes. I was able to get the anchor on board, and had to quickly motor away with the inflatable in tow as it was getting carried down under the bridgedeck of SBZ. I got upstream of SBZ and dropped that big bruce overboard and tied up to it while getting the inflatable free of all the ropes. The anchor line came back on board successfully, and with both boats in the water, took the opportunity to give Bess a run on the shore. I hope this stern anchor can hold against the flood water when the tide ebbs again this afternoon.

With the weather being forecast, we had planned on staying on board all day, and after the work required to get the dinghy to shore, it was clear that we

*would* be on board all day. With the instruments on most the day, we were seeing gusts well above 40kts and at times the sustained wind speed was close to 40.

But the winds eased in the afternoon, and as the ebb tide slowed late in the afternoon, it was the perfect chance for a walk. We were able to get to the end of the breakwater and inspect the big offshore swells. The wind was around to the SW, and the waves were big brown barrels all the way out to the bombie.

Shortened up the stern anchor line before bed, and had a long sound sleep.

### **7 April, Wooli**

After a big day at Pillar Valley looking after Ryan and Jess, we arrived back at Wooli late and had a lot of stuff to take on board, so went direct to the boat instead of checking the surf or the bar as we have on other days. No sooner were we on board than we saw Greg and Jenny motoring up the river in their new to them Perry 43 called Leilani. We put the dinghy back in and raced up to the wharf in time to help them tie up and say hello.

It was a big day, as Ryan and Jess started sleeping in our house on the 5<sup>th</sup>. They are getting the hang of everything, but it seems that the battery fuel is going slightly lower and lower each day, and that they will need to have a charger working.

### **11 May, Bawden's Beach Wooli**

With the tide almost full, I retrieved the traps from the oyster lease opposite the boat ramp, and we were ready to move the boat onto the beach. Today is full moon, and we should have been finished with our careening, but the weather has been quite showery for the last few days. Even today is overcast, but we need to use the tide, and as it turned out, Birgit would have otherwise be gone to town already. As her assistance was required, it had to be used right now. So in to the beach. The small stb motor refused to run. It started ok, and I thought it was idling ok, but it was really chugging and soon cut out and refused to restart. With much trepidation, we lifted the anchor for the first time since March and motored over into the corner and onto the shore. Anchors were set and we settled stern to beach and waited for the tide to slip away. It is forecast to only drop 1m today.

As the tide dropped and the rudders sunk in, the boat was quite level. But there was not enough time dry to apply any antifouling to the bottom of the keelsons where the bridle and chain had been rubbing in wind against tide. But the verticals on the bows needed a coat of white, and so I mixed up some colorthane and painted the bows and the port hull transom that had been showing some wear.

Found that the can of antifouling that I used in December was actually full of rubbish in a trip out to Pillar to get to remains of launching the boat. Dropped in to Leilani tomorrow.

### **12 May, Bawden's Beach Wooli**

Up at 6 to watch Greg and Jenny leaving

Brought the solar panels and frame across. When it was out we were able to fit it all onto the overhang is too great to remain unsupported





### **13 May, Bawden's Beach Wooli**

Spun the boat around with anchors on the morning high tide. This brought the bows out of the water for longer, and another coat of black went onto the keelsons.

Set the anchors so we would float out close to the edge of the spit on the night tide.

### **14 May, Wooli**

Up early to get Birgit to town. While on the edge of the spit, the tides are so small that we will remain aground for most the day. Rain is set in and persistent.

After getting back from town, the rain was so heavy that it took many minutes bailing before we could get into the dinghy. We spent the day quietly inside keeping warm and dry, and found the dinghy full to the bottom of the thwarts by mid afternoon, when I moved adjusted the anchors to move further out into deeper water on the larger night tide.

### **15 May, Bawden's Beach Wooli**

Greg's mate Patrick, back from the Tweed trip, came down to the mouth with the spinnaker and job that he had freighted in from WA. Checked it all on the grass.

Tried to move off with the morning tide, but it was not enough to get us afloat. I had deployed the big Bruce anchor out into the channel, and applied winch pressure on the warp, which spun us around and facing out, but not enough to get out in the deeper water.

I was not smart enough to foresee the problems that anchor would cause and get it in before dark. Hence, I had to get out in the dinghy at night and sweat it back in. This is something that I could not possibly do if there was any chop.

The night tide was much higher, and we easily floated off. With no winds in the forecast, I set just the main anchor for us to swing off the chain, just downstream of the boat ramp.

### **22 May, Wooli**

Spent the day on board getting jobs done. Birgit rang to say she would be back later in the week. Took Bess for a walk to the end of the wall. Today is her third day on Cortozone. I had her to the vet last Wednesday and Thursday, and on Friday some blood results back from pathology had me back in town again on Saturday to collect the pills. They do not seem to have any effect on her anaemia, as her gums and tongue are still white, but the steroids have given her an appetite, and she is eating well. On the walks today, she starts off fast, and in front of me, but within a few minutes is so puffed that I have to frequently stop and wait for her.

### **Early July, Wooli**

Months later, we're still sitting around waiting for purchases to be delivered. The inverter/charger that we paid for back in late May has still not arrived. The 15hp motor is still leaking petrol from the carburettor. After waiting for a month for Yamaha to deliver a gasket, it arrived but proved to be the wrong part. So I have been dealing with Warren from Skinner's and he's been more than helpful. After providing first a gasket and then a needle and seat, he's orders a couple of gaskets and they should arrived any day. With no car, we haven't been home for a month, but Ryan reports no problems and that they are coping well.

Dad has a buyer for the Top Hat, but there were concerns about the rig and whether it needs to be replaced. In order to ensure a sale, we decided to drop the mast and replace the rigging. The mast came down at Grafton, bringing the boat aground at the Fry St boat ramp and using Wicks and Parker with their Franna. The Harwood bridge was not opening while maintenance was being completed, so Dad took the boat down to Yamba with the mast tied down on deck. Days were spent at Yamba in the yard getting the rig back on while the buyer had a "lift and look". He agreed to buy, but we were a few hours short in getting everything completed before he had to return to Sydney.

The weather has been really pleasant, but cold at night. Birgit has been catching heaps of fish in the river, so things aren't too bad. But we should be north. With another day to complete at Yamba, I convinced Birgit that we could get to Yamba on one motor and that while I could complete the work on the Top Hat, that it was possible that Warren might be able to get to Yamba to work on the carbie while on the boat.

### **10 July, Yamba**

With the weather forecast at 10-15 SW, and the seas flat, we planned departure for 0900 with the top of the tide, counting on 6 hours to Yamba to enter at the bottom of the tide.

Up at 0600 for breakfast and put the last things away. Went ashore to take Dad's ute down to the wall to check conditions. With the drums of water topped up, we were back on board at 0815 and lifting the anchor by 0840. Motored down the river and out the bar at 0900. The pt motor alarmed with "over temp" as we crossed the bar.

Quickly set sail and headed off with 15k southerly, chasing AIS target catamaran Inforapenny north with whales everywhere.

We were off Clarence bar by about 1430. The wind was S-SE at 10-15 so I decided to sail up the river with the motor ticking over. Although it was after 1500 before we were at the walls, the overfalls were still running out hard. Sailed up past the hole in the wall and motored around to our favourite anchorage just outside the trawler wall at Yamba.

Finished off with a walk to the IGA, checked on the use of a berth for tomorrow, and then fish and chips from the co-op.

### **11 July, Yamba**

Worked on the Top Hat until about 1600.

Warren rang at lunch time. The gaskets had arrived, and while he was happy to put the carbie together, he said that they had would up the yard at Yamba and that he was not coming down for work.

Birgit took the bus to Grafton with the carbie.

### **12 July, Yamba**

Walked down to Coles with Bess this morning, while Birgit was getting Warren to rebuild the carbie before getting the 1130 bus back to Yamba.

I had the carbie on and tuned soon after 1300, but after checking the weather charts, decided it was too late to make a start north. Considered taking the afternoon to Evans Head, but I was a bit concerned about the Clarence bar with the tide almost low and a strong SE wind.

With the forecast having northerlies and variable winds for a few more days, Birgit has gone back to Grafton on the 1820 bus.

### **13 July, Iluka**

On my own for the day, I took Bess for a walk to the hardware store before motoring over to Iluka for the night. Calibrated the Navico compass on the way over.

### **14 July, Iluka**

Birgit back from town, so we motored over to Yamba to pick her up, and then back again to Iluka for the night.

### **15 July, Evans Head**

We had the motors running and heading out of Iluka at 0930, and at 1000 were over the bar with both motors running at 2200.

Wind was just a breeze out of the NW at 10-15 knots. We sailed close hauled on port tack all morning with the autopilot on wind mode at around 40°, but the wind was easing and backing to the north as the morning went on. By 1140 the wind was north and by noon had to furl the genoa and motor along with the main at around 15°, but we were pushing against the current too, so progress was not good.

Even with just the main and stb motor running at 3000rpm, the fluky wind was not good. At 1430, as we closed on the breakwater, the main came down, life jackets went on, and we came over the flat bar with both motors running. By 1515 we were anchor in the river near the bridge and logged off from the coast guard.

We travelled for 5:15 at 4.7kt avg over 24.5NM and 27.9 through the water. Our max of 8.9kts must have been with the motors on.

After getting settled and having a feed, we set off for a walk around town.

### **16 July, Bums Bay**

I was out of bed at 0530 and by 0600 we were ready to go. But the pt motor wouldn't run. It was start, but idle slowly and die away. After looking for problems and considering leaving on one motor, I finally realised that I had an empty fuel connected to the motor and it had no fuel. And by the time that was rectified, the ebbing tide had sat us on the bottom. With a bit of manoeuvring and brute force, we were in the channel and under way. 0700 on the bar.

The wind started W-NW and we began sailing with main and genoa on a course of 020° heading for a waypoint off Long Pt, and soon added the staysail looking for extra speed. By 0800 we were getting gusts over 10kts and making over 5kts over the land. The breeze lifted to the SW and by 0930 we had the spinnaker up. At 1000 we were seeing whales as we passed close by the Ballina breakwater. We passed the waypoint at 1100 and set another waypoint at Tweed Heads. There were whales everywhere, and they seemed to be on a similar course to ours, but a bit slower.

At 1115 we noticed a pod of whales ahead that did not seem to be moving north like the rest. They were dead ahead, and we continued on holding course until when maybe 300m away, suddenly two whales broke away and started to swim directly towards us, porpoising along side by side. As they came closer, coming directly towards us, I thought they had dived under us, but suddenly they came up for another breath and the one in front of the port hull took too long to go down, and as it lifted its tail clear of the water to dive, we drove straight over its tail. The port bow hit with a loud bang, the whole boat quivered and shook and the port bow lifted maybe half a metre out of the water. Although there was no splintering sound, just a dull quiver, I ran down into the port hull and looked around for any evidence of damage. Nothing was to be seen. We were close offshore to the north east of Lennox Head, close to Jews Pt, and it ran through my head that if any sign of water was apparent, that I would head straight into the beach.

We continued on under spinnaker and main. The fresh SW breeze was up to 15kts with white tops and it was cold. Around noon, as we were passing close under Cape Byron, the breeze dropped to around 10kts, but then freshened again through the afternoon as the wind came around from the SW to the S and we poled out the kite to run DDW, but when it went SE we had to drop the spinnaker to gybe and reset it on stb tack. Through the afternoon we were getting gusts well over 15kts, and it was concerning that the autopilot might drop out and leave the boat out of control. But it was all good, and the wind eased as the heat went from the sun, and at 1730 as the sun was setting, we dropped the spinnaker and went back to main and genoa while we had light and were now clear of the reefs off Tweed. My objective all day had

been to make it to the reefs off Tweed by dark, and that's exactly how it worked out. Off those reefs, the current was very strong, with more than 2 knots difference between boatspeed and speed over ground.

As we turned more west on course to the Gold Coast Seaway, we were back on port tack, and although the night was dark, there was so much light off the city that visibility was not a problem. Sailing on broad reach at good speed under the city lights was beautiful.

We were on the Seaway bar at 2130 and had to muck around finding space to anchor at Bums Bay. Having been through the middle of the mooring field in the dark and unable to find space, we ended up anchored down near the boat ramp.

We travelled 14:56 at 5.4kt with a max of 11.1 achieved under kite in the afternoon, having covered 81.1NM and 92.4 through the water.

### **17 July, Southport**

Birgit's shoulder was getting worse, and wanted a doctor. With her pain, it seemed that biking it was not possible, so we motored over to Southport to get within easy range of the hospital. Found anchorage off the centataph at the south end of the beach. Bess and I walked Birgit up to the tram stop and put her on to get to the hospital, and then went back to the boat for a few hours.

### **19 July, Southport**

Birgit's aunt Margret and Leif are coming to visit today. I went off to the shops for a couple of last minutes items. Prepared to make sail this afternoon.

M&L did not arrive until afternoon, and it was 1330 by the time we were back on board. While warming the motors to lift the anchor, the stb motor was "click, click, clicking", which was diagnosed as it being half in gear. And when the gear cable lever was moved, it was found to be locked and then snap; broken.

I took it all apart and made phone calls to find that a replacement cable was available at Whitworths. After the walk up to the shops, I started into the repair, being able to feed the replacement cable through the cross cockpit duct before it was too dark to continue.

### **20 July, Macleay Island**

After breakfast I started into the motor binnacle, only to find that all the screws were corroded and frozen. I took a walk to the hardware on Johnstone St to buy some driver bits to try using the rattle gun to remove the frozen screws, but in the end had to drill the screw to get it apart.

Ready to go at 1000, but now the anchor is stuck. Winched up chain, but it's locked before the bridle dog even gets to the boat. Found that there was a bouy about a metre underwater. With my eardrums and Birgit's shoulder, and the water visibility almost zero, I was not prepared to go into the water. Rang

a dive shop, and they were most helpful. He sent over Casey, one of his divers, who efficiently had the buoy cut off and we were free.

We were underway at 1200, but with the tide low, the western channel was hard to identify, so we headed up the main channel past the Seaway before the sails could go up. On the way to Steiglitz, we unfurled and refurled the genoa a number of times, motorsailing or motoring until. Once clear of Steiglitz, we were able to sail on under the power lines and into the channel to the west of Macleay Island, where we went as far north as possible before coming out from the shelter of Garden Island to the west.

### **21 July, Mooloolaba**

I was up early and under way immediately at 0610 with Birgit and Bess still in bed. The moon was just up, and the sun rose soon behind it at 0640. Pushing the end of the flood tide, we motored out into the bay on the stb motor until approaching the Banana Bank at 0715 we had sails out. While reaching at 5 knots in the 8 knot SW breeze, I made water for about half an hour. Around 0900 we were able to break out the spinnaker and with it set as close as possible, we were able to maintain the course up the west of the bay, passing between St Helena and Mud Islands. We had an excellent run for over an hour, making more than 7NM in one hour, with max speed recorded at 9.3 in the light breeze. It was only 9knots AWS and 12 TWS. Approaching Redcliffe, the wind dropped away to nothing, and we had to motor again. With no wind I went right up to the sand at the red turning mark at the top of the bay before turning east to Bribie Island. We had to motor all across to Skirmish Point in the light SE breeze, where we were able to again set sail for the run north. But as it was after 1400 and the tide had turned again, we had to maintain motor to keep up speed towards Mooloolaba. The predicted ETA of 1800 was pretty accurate. The tide increased through the afternoon, but so did the wind speed, and we had a nice reach up the coast before getting sails away while there was still light in the sky, but it was pretty dark by the time we came passed the dredge at the entrance to the river. We motored up the river to our favourite spot near the outrigger park and enjoyed a nice hot curry.

The next day Isabella and Chris came to visit. We had a walk on the esplanade in the afternoon.

On the Sunday, we took the dinghy to the coastguard wharf and walked along the beach with Ross to the markets, where we met with Georgie and Graham off Livewire.

On Monday we had Starship and Livewire over for morning tea.

On Tuesday Starship took a borrowed car to Lamb Island and we looked after their dinghy for the day. We took that opportunity to paint out the bottom of our dinghy.

On Wednesday we put a bike together for last provisioning with fuel and food before sundowners and dinner on Starship.

## **27 July, Double Island Point**

There was no hurry this morning, as the destination is only 45 NMs from Mooloolaba, and the winds forecast to be favourable. Tide times mean that it would be impossible to cross Wide Bay today. While up before 0600, there were still a few things to put away before starting the motors and getting the anchor up by 0700. I had problems with the stb motor as I forgot to turn on the fuel cock, and the port motor was heating up way too quickly. I shut down the port motor, and after a couple of minutes, when it restarted the temp was dropping as it ran, so up came the anchor.

Motored slowly into the flood tide and past Starship. As we came past the Coastguard, the port motor was getting hot again, so I shut it down. As we came around the corner into the breakwater, I restarted it again and ran it at 2000rpm, but by the time we were clear of the bar at 0730, it was again hot.

Seas were flat, and the wind a light offshore breeze. Intended to get the spinnaker up straight away, so rigged up the lines and then went to get the main up head to wind, only to find the halyard wrapped around a couple of steps. One step was just above the lowers, and it was difficult to get the right tension on the halyard in order to flick it off. Once cleared, it then tangles again in the manoeuvring around getting ready. Finally it was up, and then the spinnaker played up. I pulled the sail out the sock on the wrong side of the bridle that pulls the collar over the sail, so the sail was bunching up and not falling out the mouth of the sock, and had to be reset.

The offshore breeze was really light, and we were making only 2 knots in less than 4 knots wind. At least we were on course, but by 0900 we had only made 6NM from the anchorage and the wind dropped all together. I had only just decided that it was not going to fill in until there was some heat over the land, and as such, doused the spinnaker and started the motor when suddenly the main gybed across and we realised that the SE breeze had kicked in. I quickly reset the spinnaker sheet onto the port side and we were away again.

The wind had too much S in it, so we ran out with COG of 020 heading out to sea looking for more wind and expecting the forecast E breeze in the afternoon. Spinnaker was tacked down tight between both bows and this allowed us to come up reaching quite high. At times we had AWA of 75-80.

By 1000, I was looking to bear away more to the north. The spinnaker halyard was quite high, with the dyneema right up into the masthead spectacle. With the luff tight, reaching was easy. The tack was held up to windward, but the luff was in line with the centreline right down to a metre or so from the tack. Trying to bear away, I could get to AWA160 ok, but it was blanketed behind the main if we go any deeper. I released some halyard, down till the red came into the spectacle, trying to open the slot near the top of the main. But this slackened off the luff and let the sail fall off to leeward. Tightening the tack to the windward bow helped, but the clew was too high.

Sailing on autopilot wind mode at 170, suddenly the spinnaker wrapped the headstay, and appeared that the top of the sail was around the furled up genoa about 4 times. We tried sheeting in, brace on, brace off, coming up into the wind, and then finally letting the sheet go way out. The loose sheet seemed to work, as the spin opened up and flew like a flag almost immediately. Danger averted.

As a result, the pole came out immediately. With the pole held up by the staysail halyard, and back by another brace snapshackled onto the tack, we were getting the tack out wide of the windward side of the boat and the spinnaker was filling nicely right down to DDW, but we sailed all afternoon at around AWA160-170.

At 1600, 1NM east of the Double Island Point lighthouse, the spinnaker came down. All lines were cleaned up, main gybed onto port tack, and the genoa came out as we came up onto a broad reach that tightened up into a close reach and a beat up into the bay for our anchorage.

There were 4 other boats already close to the beach, a catamaran, a motorboat and two monohulls. We doused sail and motored in the last few hundred metres till we were in about 3.5m depth (at low tide) and anchored with 40m of chain out, at 25°56.6S 153°10.0E and all done by 1650.

Travelled 9:27 for 52.0NM and 58.5NM through the water, avg 5.5k and max 10.5k. Trip total 271NM.

### **28 July, Tin Can Bay**

It was a joggily night under DIP as the wind came around more to the east and the chop came into the bay. We were up early, before sunrise, to see the first rays on the sand cliffs on Rainbow Beach. Slow leisurely breakfast on muesli before heading for the Wide Bay Bar before high tide.

Up anchor at 0745 with no wind. We just motored away slowly for the first hour covering only 3.8NM by 0845. The westerly was then strong enough to be worth sailing, and with full rig and motor idling ran the rest of the way over to WBB#1 at over 6 knots. Approaching the first waypoint, at 0945, the genoa was furled and the port motor started. The conditions were excellent. The swell was up to a bit over a metre and a few of them stood up like they would break as the depth suddenly stepped up from 13 to 5m. Waypoint #2 was passed at around 1005. The port motor ran ok right through to near WP#3 before it started playing up. It approached 80° and then started running rough. Gave it a rest for a few minutes and then it ran ok again.

Once inside Inskip Pt, we continued south with the flood tide heading for Tin Can Bay, where Dad found us. He came out in the Savage, and we towed him back to TCB, where we anchored at 25°54.341S 153°00.096E in 1.6m at high tide. We covered 23.2NM in 4:10, averaging 5.6 with a 11.7 max. Trip total 294NM.



We went ashore for an inspection of Dad's place and a walk to lunch, before back on board at 1500 as the boat was about to take the bottom.

### **17 August, Tin Can Bay**

Birgit away at Lightning Ridge. We've been at TCB for weeks, sitting on the sand bank on every tide and getting some jobs done. Bess enjoyed being able to explore to edge of the sandbank looking for fish, doing ever smaller laps as the tide came in until she would be back at the boat ready to come aboard once the sand was gone.

Jobs included working on the motors. Efforts to replace the impellor in the pt motor were fruitless. The leg is frozen on and just couldn't be removed. Dad's neighbour from the end of the street (Tim) lent me his oxy acetylene tanks and Ross off Starship operated it for me, but no success. Tim took me to another neighbour who had been an outboard mechanic, and he asked about the thermostat. After some help from the internet, I was able to remove the thermostat housing and found it full of sand and rust. After cleaning and reassembling, the motor seemed to be running properly without getting hot. The stb motor had been coughing and flooding like it had been at Grafton, so I took it off cleaned it again and it seemed to test ok, so back together again. An oil change found the sump full of petrol, and I suspected that due to the flooding problem back at Wooli, so just cleaned up and put it all back together.

There were shopping trips to Gympie and a BBQ at the 4Cs (Crab Creek Cruising Club). There were daily walks and more jobs, both on the boat and at dad's place. But the winds are forecast to go SW and get fresh, so it's time to go.

Planning and getting set for departure tomorrow. The boat is sitting on the bottom when the tide is below about 1.3 or 1.4m. Tomorrow's high tide is 0600 and only a 1.6, so I will have to be ready to go straight away. Recovered the small anchor that was holding the stern over the bank, leaving just fore and aft.

### **18 August, River Heads**

Out of bed at 0530. Dinghy in and stern anchor recovered, all ready and anchor up at 0600. Only just afloat, so motored very slowly out into the channel and clear. Exit Snapper Creek at 0630. By 0730, the stb motor was running badly again, loading up and cutting out. With the cowling off, it was blowing smoke and fumes everywhere out the powerhead.

Anchored up on the western bank just north of Teebar Creek at 0745. Found that oil spewed out the dipstick as soon as it was removed, and smelled of petrol. I removed the fuel pump, and found that when I operated it manually by pushing on the rod in the back of it, that fuel poured back along the pushrod and into the rocker cover. This has been the problem for a long time. Lucky I had a spare fuel pump off the old Yamaha, and still had 2 litres of oil, so drained the sump and refilled.

Once repaired and given a short test run, I raised the anchor and let the ebb tide carry me north toward Inskip.

At first there was no wind, but the SW change started filling in at 0920. Drifted along with the wind and tide till I was down at Inskip Point at about 1000. Anchored there until 1200, when I headed off up the Straits under genoa alone with a strong flood tidal flow assisting.

Close to Turkey Island I was spooked by the strong current and the tide still quite low, remembering the last time we came through here. So I furled up the genoa and motored around the corner, where I unfurled again and ran square with just genoa again, but this time pushing a strong tide which at times was more than 2 knots.

Mid afternoon I came across a rescue boat that was tracking a pair of humpbacks that seemed to be in distress. They were only just treading water, holding themselves against the flood tide carrying them south towards Sheridan Flats.

Reaching along at a consistent 8 knots under genoa, the flood tide meant that I only covered 6NM in the hour to 1540.

Through the afternoon, the incoming flood tide was holding me back, and by the time I was clear out in the middle of the passage, it was clear that I wouldn't make Great Woody by dark, so I started looking for options that provided a shelter from the gusty SW winds. I decided on River Heads, so came up onto the wind to bring me up to the yellow marker out from the Mary River entrance, where I furled up and started the stb motor, and started up the channel under power with the tide assisting. Close to the heads I started the second motor for manoeuvrability. Just off the point, there were severe whirlpools swirling around, with another pair of whales playing in the current. Carried on up the Susan River channel past the moorings and a couple of travelling yachts and anchored up in amongst the mangroves at 25°25.49S 152°54.19E.

Sailed just over 6 hours covering 36.3NM and 34.8 through the water, for an avg of 6.0 and max 10.7.

#### **14 August, Burnett Heads**

Woke to a fine sunny day and gusty SW winds, with no hurry to leave so that I could make the most of the ebb tide later in the morning.

Up anchor at 0705. Wind against tide was awkward, requiring both engines doing fwd/rev spin to keep the chain clear of hull. Motored down to the heads, and had motors off by 0720. Started off with genoa on stb tack running out the Mary River and across the straits a bit before gybing back to port at 0805. I already had a max speed of 11.0 on the log. In the hour from 0800 to 0900, I covered 8.5NM. Coming past Woody Island the sustained speed was sitting above 10 for a few miles.

The wind dropped and headed once clear of Great Woody, becoming quite variable in strength and direction, and I was exposed to large seas and had to come up onto the wind to follow the channel out to the fairway beacon. The coast from there runs west, and so the seas had a fetch of up to 20 miles, making for a sharp steep sea.

I decided to stay as high on the wind as I could to try and close the coast so as to get some smoother seas. Sailing across the bay on autopilot operating in wind mode at 55 on port tack, I was bashing some waves. With the decks awash, at times, I would look up and find the windscreens covered in green water. Water was coming right over the turret top, all the way to the back.

It took two hours to cover the 14NM from the fairway across to Elliott Heads, where I was able to get some shelter from the coast. While the winds were easier near the coast, and bearing away reduced the apparent wind, I was still averaging 7 knots along the coast to Burnett Heads, where I furled up and motored up to the anchorage.

Anchoring in 8m of water, the flood tide rushing in against the strong SW wind was causing huge waves on the river. I dropped 10 m of chain, went up to the front and dropped another 10 chain, and started to get the bridle ready for a final drop of chain, when the chain pulled tight against the wind and ran out fast against the clutch. I grabbed the winch handle and tightened up the clutch. But the chain jammed. Somehow, the chain had lifted up a loop in the locker, and jammed that loop up into the hawse pipe. The winch would only pull and push chain a couple of links at a time. The chain was pulling under the hulls against the severe current and wind, so the bridle needed to be put out immediately. By putting a shackle through the chain along the catwalk, I was able to pull and tie some slack chain onto the bollard, and then was able to free the jammed loop and set the bridle.

Anchor set at 1540, after 8:35 over 59.7NM for an avg of 7.0 and max 11.5, having gone 61.2 through the water. Trip total now 391NM.

## **20 August, Round Hill Creek**

It was a fine sunny morning, but a bitterly cold wind.

At 0640 I lifted the anchor, with the bridle already off. There were 6 other yachts in front of me heading down the channel and turning north.

By 0700 I had the motors off, and at first ran DDW with no sails to clear away from the big Prout that had sailed out the channel. I had the genoa set and on course at 0705, with 47 to go to 1700 waypoint.

With the wind over 20 knots and well aft of the beam, I was reaching along at over 8 knots hourly avg and had breakfast under way. By 0830 there was a max of 10.4 on the log, but that was as high as it got all day.

By 0900 the wind was dropping and backing. The afternoon forecast was for light SE breeze, with stronger wind out to sea, but I decided to stay on course for the 1770 WP. With low tide at about 1430, I was in no hurry to arrive early.

By noon the winds had dropped so much that I furled the genoa, came head to wind to raise the main, and fell back on course with the genoa unfurled again. Sailed most the afternoon with the autopilot on wind mode at 170 with the genoa set by the lee.

Speed dropped and dropped until at 1500, with another 4 to the waypoint, I started motoring. Soon after the red cutting board vibrated off the fish table, and I circled back to recover it.

Coming past the point at 1545, ready to enter, there were then a couple of whales playing around between me and the rocks, with a bloke on SUP going to have a look. The current was carrying me west and onto the sandbanks, so I couldn't muck around and started up the channel. It was still low and shallow, so I proceeded up with just the stb motor at 1200 and 3 knots boatspeed.

Anchored at 1615 at 24°09.9S 151°52.8E.

### **August 24, Seventeen Seventy**

Birgit arrived back on the boat last night. We took the bikes ashore and rode into Agnes Waters for reprovisioning at the supermarket and from the market lady that sells at the oval each Thursday, with the plan of leaving in the morning.

Went to the spit for a walk in the afternoon, and Greg Bishop and his son Jason came by in their dinghy. They had anchored Leilani offshore in Bustard Bay to wait for rising tide to enter the creek.



**Sunsets at Seventeen Seventy are always stunning**

Decided to stay on an extra day in order to catch up with the Bishops tomorrow.

**August 26, Cape Capricorn**

With a low tide in the early morning, we had to wait before leaving. Besides, we had lent our bosuns chair to the Bishops, who had promised to return it early in the morning.

Up anchor at 0800, and it was 0830 before we were clear of the creek, and running out from the lee of the headland under genoa alone.

By 0930 we had covered 6.7nm in the hour, but the wind was easing, so I was able to get up a bit of mainsail while running downwind. We were now sailing DDW with a double reefed main and full genoa wing and wing, and were now sailing in company with dolphins. These were the most acrobatic dolphins I have ever seen, and the display went on for more than an hour. They carried us on until we were alongside the Outer Rocks off Bustard Head.

It was a steady TWS around 20 knots, and we had covered 13.4 in 2 hours since putting the sails up at the heads, with a day max of 11.8 on the instruments.

By the early afternoon, the wind was around to the east and had eased to 15 knots, so the reefs were thrown out of the main. 1400, gybed the headsail onto stb tack and came up onto a broad reach.

The winds freshened a little through the afternoon, and we continued bubbling along. Around 1430 it was noticed that one of the lines was heavy, but as soon as I started to retrieve it, the weight was gone, and with it the new lure that the Bishops had given us yesterday.

It seemed like we were pushing tide all afternoon. Mostly it was around a 1 knot difference between boatspeed and SOG, but around Rundle Island and on to the Cape, it was more like 1.5knots.

With the tide low at around 1900, it was prudent to anchor out at Cape Capricorn tonight and go into Yellowpatch with the rising tide tomorrow. Although we had waypoints from the Bishops, it would be difficult light and an ebb tide by the time we get there.

1650 and we were bearing away around Cape Capricorn. There were a couple of boats in the bay under the lighthouse tramway; one a tinny that appeared to be with the lighthouse, and a large fishing boat. So we continued around the point to the end of the beach under the sand blow and anchored 1720 at 23°29.3S 151°13.6E. We had covered 49.7nm in 9:11, avg 6.2 and max 11.8 while through the water was 62.9nm.

### **27 August, Yellowpatch**

Woke to a heavy overcast sky with showers scudding by to the north, and some appearing over the sandblow and coming in from the sea.

We had a leisurely breakfast waiting for the tide to start flooding and listened to Insiders on the radio while making water for our drinking cask before heading into Yellowpatch, hauling anchor at 1000 and following the waypoints that had been given to us up the eastern passage into the channel.



**SeeBeeZee anchored at Yellowpatch**

**29 August, Great Keppel Island Resort Beach**

Forecast is for a flush of fresh SE wind early, dropping off through the day and becoming a NE breeze in the afternoon. The hope was to get away from Yellowpatch with time to make North West Island (NW Is) with enough sunlight to find an anchorage.

With the low tide at around 0830 in the morning, we couldn't escape Yellowpatch until we had a bit of flood. Lifted the anchor at 1055, and we were clear of the bar at around 1120, getting the main and genoa up immediately.

We came up onto the wind on stb tack and were easily laying NW Is, but with the flood tide running into the coast at more than a knot, we were not making enough SOG to make NW Is in time. We continued on out to see for just 20 minutes and covered 2.5nm in that time, but with the wind forecast to go NE and the tide not helping, we had to decide to abandon that plan and go on to Great Keppel Island (GKI) instead.

On course around the outside of Hummocky Island and with spinnaker up at 1140. By 1230 we had it poled out and running downwind on course 300 heading direct to the west side of GKI. As the afternoon went on, the wind backed and by 1430 we had the luff of the spin pulled down tight and the apparent wind was around to 90°. With the apparent wind direction came more pressure and more speed, and we finished the day drawing along at 6

knots. By 1600 the spinnaker was away in the locker and we came up into the Resort Bay under main alone and then motored in the last few minutes.

Anchored up at 20°11.02S 150°56.10E, having gone 5:20 hours at an avg 5.4k and max 8.5k over 28.6nm. Trip total now 527nm.

Saw a couple on the beach with a dog. I went in and had a chat and learned that dogs were ok around the residences near the old resort, so we all went for a sunset walk on the beach.

### **30 August, Great Keppel Island**

Went for a walk around past the Hideaway, where Birgit had a swim on the beach.

### **31 August, Island Head Creek**

Anchor up at 0650 and stb motor took us out past the moorings while we hoisted sail.

At 0715 we were sailing DDW with main and genoa through the gap to Middle Island with just 7 knots of TWS and on to North Keppel. Water temp 22.7°.

We had the spinnaker out by 0740 and while it was carrying us high of our course and well out to sea to the East of North Keppel, this was suitable with the winds forecast to go NE again this afternoon.

We had breakfast under way, and our overnight neighbour Zolibati went motoring past us to the west and continued on towards the coast.

All morning we ran DDW with the spinnaker poled out, at times with the spinnaker 10° by the lee as the winds stayed in the SE at around 10 knots.

We had only just finished lunch as we were approaching Cape Manifold when we landed a nice spotted mackerel while the winds suddenly backed to the east and freshened. By 1330 we switched pilot from bearing to wind mode so that the spinnaker didn't peel as the gusts headed us, and the apparent wind was coming up to 100° and later in the day had the pilot set to 87° as we pinched past the islands off Port Clinton.

It was a fresh exciting sail all afternoon as we bubbled along on a close reach, recording between 3.5 to 4.0nm over the ground each half hour while we were pushing against the ebb tide.

Once north of Port Clinton the winds dropped and we chose to go inside Dome Island and on to Island Head. We had the sails down by 1650 and motored in to the creek into the sunset, where we had the anchor down and set at 22°21.51S 150°38.59E by 1730. After 10:25, we had covered 56.8nm at 5.4k avg and 10.4k max (at around 1400) with trip total of 578nm.



### **1 September, Hexham Island**

At 0900 we raised the mainsail at anchor and headed out.. There were whales in the entrance to Island Head Creek as we motored out and clear of the head.

By 0945 we had the spinnaker set, and soon the pole was on and we were running DDW.

The wind stayed a steady SE at around 10 all day. Low tide was around noon, so we were pushing against to current at first and then getting assisted by the tide in the afternoon. There were whales and fishing boats, and it was a lovely sail up to Hexham, where we sailed right in and furled up before motoring only minutes into the anchorage we had to share with a large yacht, Blackwattle and its German owner Christian. Had a walk on the beach in the afternoon, and then had a pro-fishing boat come and anchor right next to us for the night.

Sailed 5:50 at 4.9kts and 9.8 max over 28.6NM and 34.5 through the water. Our trip total is now 615NM.

### **2 September, Middle Percy Island, West Bay**

After a relaxing breakfast, we made a fast departure from Hexham. We have the procedure down to this; take the bridle off the anchor chain, raise the main, Birgit starts hauling the anchor while I start the motor, anchor up, genoa out, motor off, and we are sailing in about 5 minutes from starting the motor.

Up anchor at 0825 and by 0900 we had the staysail up too, but had made only 2.8nm since anchor. Wind was only 6k TWS and our AWA 90°, and by 1030 covered only 8.4nm and because the strong ebb tide was carrying us to East and windward, we decided we could carry spinnaker. It was set shy, with the extra speed bringing the apparent wind forward, and had the autopilot now on wind mode at only 79°. For a while I reset the autopilot to course mode and played the sheet, which gave us better boatspeed without the rudder changing and slowing us.

We had the same wind shift again today, at 1245, with the wind freshening and going north, we furled the spin and got the genoa out again for the last 5nm across to Percy, now pushing against the tide as it rushes out between Middle and South Percy Islands.

At 1420 we were anchored and West Bay Middle Percy at 21°39.18S 150°14.65E after almost 6 hours over 23.2nm for an avg of 3.9 and 6.2 max. Through the water we pushed more than 30nm. Trip total now 634nm.

### **3 September, Middle Percy Island, West Bay**

Had morning tea on Cruisin Hues with Peter and Sally and a walk and swim on the beach in the PM, where we met Lindsay and Kate from the Treehouse and were invited for a goat curry at the A-frame. While on the beach, Peter and Anne arrived in Sarah McGill.

We stayed at the A-frame till 2100, and partying continued around the bay until after midnight.

#### **4 September, Middle Percy Island, White's Bay**

Woke to find that most the boats had left. It was a rough and windy night, and there were only 3 other boats in the bay at sunrise. The monohulls anchored out of the bay suffer much worse.

Walked to Homestead in the morning. Left the boat at 0900 and lingered around the Treehouse for a while, meeting Steve and John before we walked up the "Long Track", carrying Bess in a backpack up the hill. Had lime water with Cate at the homestead, getting a tour of the house and garden before walking back down the "Short Track". Bess was ok to walk downhill, and at times was able to run.

Arrived back at West Bay with the wind in the NW and the boat rolling badly. We had sails up in less than 15 minutes, and a casual sail around the bottom of the island and into White's Bay with tidal assistance all the way around. Anchored in about 5m at low tide.

It was found that we have internet connection from the masthead. Accessed weather forecast and learned that there is a good southerly forecast for the end of the week.

Had a late fire on the beach with a beer.

#### **5 September, White's Bay**

Had a walk up the creek behind White's Bay. Away from the boat from 1000 till 1115.

After lunch and clean up, back to the beach for fishing and a beer next to the fire. Gone from the boat from 1500 till 1800.

Back on board, we checked weather on the internet and watched a movie.

#### **7 September, West Bay**

The wind behave as forecast, and while light all day, started off in the south and went around to east in the early afternoon.

After completing a number of jobs on board, and running the desal for 2 hours, we had a lunch of chick pea curry, went to the beach for a swim and container of baitfish, and then headed off for West Bay.

As the tide was half out, once clear of Spur Rock we could hardly make headway against the current. The wind was only around 6 knots, and we were sailing nicely at about 3 knots, but could only move north or south, towards or away from Spur Rock, but not down the channel. After half an hour, we started the stb motor and motor sailed the rest of the way.

Back at West Bay after 1:40 over 5.4nm and 8.1nm through the water. Trip total 644nm.

At the A-frame for sundowners, a kangaroo was being prepared for a stew. Since we had had a big lunch, we only stayed for drinks and chats, with Kate coming down from the homestead for the evening too. The stern anchor line on the dinghy was parted when we came back.

### **8 September, Digby Island**

I was up before the sun to go and find the lost dinghy anchor while the tide was low. This turned into a long leisurely breakfast, and we then went ashore for a coffee at the treehouse.

Back on the boat, we were ready to go in 15 minutes, and lifting the anchor at 1040. The throttle cable on the stb engine broke as we were getting away, but I was able to set the throttle at a useful level and found that if we left the engine in gear, that we had good control by starting and stopping the motor.

While the SE breeze was light, the ebb tide was against us. I had misjudged the effect of tide, with the easterly ebb much more influential on our roughly 300° course

With the breeze dropping away to nothing, the stb motor came on at around 1400, and we were at anchor at Digby at 1615. There was a smashed old trawler yacht on the beach, and a Pellin cat at anchor. We chatted to the cat for a while before having a quick walk around the wreck on the beach, but we both found it quite depressing, especially in contrast to day we had here last year, and were soon back on board for sundowners.

### **9 September, Scawfell Island**

Having fought the tide all day yesterday, we were up early to make the most of the long day we had to Scawfell.

At 0550, the main was up before the anchor, and so the stb motor ran for less than a minute to get us away and clear to the west of Henderson Island. By 0630m we had covered 2nm and were running down wing and wing on stb tack. The wind settled in to around 165@17 for most of the morning, but was later very variable in strength and direction. At 0715 we came onto port tack wing and wing so as to be able to clear Double Island. Around 0905 we gybed back to stb again to bear away more to the west and stay on course to Scawfell, and then later poled out the genoa and came up to around 165AWA, and later had to gybe back again.

When we were finally able to come back to stb with both the main and genoa, with the wind coming around to 120@20 we made excellent speed for the last leg around the corner of Scawfell and into the bay, where we were anchored by 1415 at 20°51.8S 149°16.0E.

We covered the 45.7nm in 8:14, averaging 5.5 with a max of 11.2. Trip total now 707. Water temp 24.5°.

During the day, we noticed a number of jets heading north, leaving prominent contrails. It was observed that each of these trails kinked to the west just

ahead of us. I assume that the point of that kink is actually over Hamilton Island and that the jets are using navigation equipment at the Hamilton Island airport for their navigation.

Late in the afternoon, we went to shore, walking along the western beach past the camping area and into the creek, before dinghying around the east side of the bay on our way back for sundowners.

### **10 September, Goldsmith Island**

After breakfast, and checking the forecasts, we decided to head off to Goldsmith. The expected SE was to continue today but drop out and go a bit variable after that. Low tide was at 0706 at Scawfell, so we knew we would be pushing the flood tide again today.

Observations recorded in OCPN.

It was a slow and at frustrating sail against the tide, mostly sailing wing and wing. Anchored at 20°40.3S 149°09.0E at around 1500. Sailed 29.9nm over 36.7nm of water in 6:47, averaging 4.4 with a max of 7.7. Trip total now 737nm.

### **12 September, Thomas Island**

With light SE, sailed over to Thomas and anchored close in to beach at the east end of the north side of the island.

### **13 September, Shaw Island Roberta Bay**

Woke to a heavy overcast sky. Being so close to the rocky shore, the creaking chain and gusts of wind kept us both awake much of the night.

Around 0900 we went ashore on the eastern beach of Thomas. There, Birgit and Bess walked and chatted to Mark and Lyn off Rapallion while I climbed the cliffs overlooking the beach.

Back on board, we tidied up and then left at around 1100. The wind was light from the NE, and we sailed close hauled across to Shaw, against the tide, but with conditions so calm that we made good headway with only 6 knots of breeze, and in an hour were anchored at Shaw.

We went ashore before lunch, and returned with a good catch of hardy heads for Bess.

Learned later that this was a green zone.

### **14 September, Shaw Island Burning Point**

Southerly change forecast for tonight, so we are moving to an anchorage on the north side of Shaw Island.

Sailed around to Burning Point. Whales came through the anchorage late in the afternoon.

### **15 September, Airlie Beach**

Woke to strong SE winds. Gusts to 25 knots while at anchor.

Had breakfast while considering the sail options. Decided to put a reef in the main before raising the anchor and moving out of the moored boats, but as soon as we were under way, decided that the genoa alone would be enough in this wind. Fast sail to Airlie.

### **21 September, Hook Island Stonehaven**

Motor around to Abell Point public wharf to fill water tanks. Motored away and stopped for breakfast in no wind. Gradually it filled in gently from the north, and gave us enough to sail across to Stonehaven. This involved our first tack for the year.

### **22 September, Whitsunday Island Cid Harbour Dugong Inlet**

Motored around to Butterfly Bay for lunch, in no wind. Picked up a mooring. Later sailed and then motor sailed down to Cid Harbour for the night.

### **23 September, Whitsunday Island Gulnare Inlet**

Sailed out of Cid Harbour with the tide. Once we came out of the harbour the winds became too fluky, so we first motor sailed and then motored over to Beach 25 where we waited for the plane at Hamilton, which was over 2 hours late.

Motored into the fuel wharf where we topped up petrol and water and brought Charlie and Claire aboard.

Sailed out to Gulnare and motored up the passage to an anchor in time for sunset.

### **24 September, Whitsunday Island Chance Bay**

Mainsail up at anchor, and then motored down Gulnare. Once out of the inlet and in sight of the P&P cruise ship, we were able to unfurl the genoa and cut the motor, and sailed out through the east side of Fitzallen Island. Out near Surprise Rock, we tacked and headed in towards Chance Bay, where we stopped for lunch. After lunch, a walk on the beach and a swim and we decided to stay where we were for the night.

### **25 September, Lupton Island Waites Bay**

We motored away early to make the most of the end of the ebb tide to get through Solway Passage and see Whitehaven Beach. Anchored close in, we had breakfast, and then a walk to the south lookout before a swim back to the boat.

We sailed off the mooring on starboard tack, with the initial plan of going around the top of Haslewood Island and in to Waites Bay, but soon changed my mind and headed back out Solway Passage and around the south the Waites. Went ashore for a walk and scramble and up to look at the view to the east.

### **26 September, Shaw Island Queen Margrette Bay**

Motored out clear of Waites Bay and hoisted the new white spinnaker for the first time. Sailed at AWA around 160 on port tack in very light conditions to the east side of Shaw Island, where we passed between the outlying islands and in to Queen Margrette Bay. Another walk and swim after lunch, this time without Claire who was suffering the sun.

### **27 September, Lindeman Island Plantation Point**

Woke to the most clear morning. The water was so clear we were hovering over the sand 3 metres below with apparently nothing between.

Motored around to Roberta Bay for a walk and swim. Bess came in for a swim at the end of our walk.

Attempted to sail to Keyser Island, but had to resort to motor again to get us in to Megan Bay where we had lunch, before sailing on into the light N breeze, making the most of the change of tide to get north. Tacked back to the east and in to Kennedy Sound and anchored south of Lindeman Island at Plantation Point.

### **28 September, Whitsunday Island Torres Herald Bay**

With a plane to meet, we left Lindeman right after breakfast, getting under way by 0730. We motored slowly on stb motor all the way up to the marina at Hamilton, where we arrived at 0930 but were informed that there was a queue for the fuel wharf, so drifted outside in the calm. After waiting almost half hour, we were called in, only to find that there was another boat already tying up at the wharf and another in front of us waiting for their turn. While we were looking at the options, another motor boat queued up behind us. We spun around and motored out to consider options. Ended up calling the harbourmaster for permission to bring dinghy in, but were instead offered a berth for an hour for \$20. Said our goodbyes to Charlie and Claire, and had a walk to the supermarket before filling water and heading out.

Sailed through Fitzallen Passage to the mouth of Turtle Bay, where the wind died. We floundered around for an hour doing the washing and housekeeping before motoring in to Torres Herald Bay.

Using the satellite photos for accuracy, we anchored right in against the coral between a couple of other cats, and were able to bottom fish and catch a couple of stripeys and a couple of sweetlip in the evening.

### **29 September, Thomas Island Anchorage #2**

Nice calm anchorage in the morning, and we did a few housekeeping tasks and read books.

Around 1100, the breeze started up from the south, and although light, was pushing us into the coral. At 1130 we raised anchor and motored out.

With no wind, we motored right over to Fitzallen Island where we were not only pushing the flood tide, but suddenly we were pushing into 15 knots of

northerly. At that stage, our objective for the night was Cid Harbour, but with the wind and a text message from U4IA, we decided to head south.

Passed through between Hamo and Dent and out the other end set up the white spinnaker. We only sailed for another mile or so when suddenly the wind was on the nose and the spinnaker had to come down immediately. Well, it would have been immediately if it wasn't for the snubber line on the sock being caught around a mast step.

With the spinnaker in the sock, we motored west for a few minutes and found a good breeze again from the north again. So out came the spinnaker, which carried us until west of Burning Point on Shaw Island the wind again died. We motored off to the east, heading into the Burning Point anchorage. A nice spotted mackerel was caught as we approached Shaw Island. We anchored and cleaned the mackerel, but the wind kicked in again from the north, so the anchorage was a bit rough. So we decided to move around to the south side of Shaw.

As we came past the end of Burning Point again, there was a text message from U4IA suggesting we meet them at Thomas, so that became the destination. Sailed over under main and genoa, and were anchored in close just after sunset, and then spent the evening visiting Ian and Bec.

## **2 October, Hook Island Nara Inlet**

On the third night at anchorage 2 on the south side of Thomas Island, we woke to a freshening breeze that had gone round to the east. Swell was rolling into the bay and we had to leave as soon as there was light.

They had been lovely days at Thomas. The first day had us ashore with Bec and Ian for a swim and and their blow up SUPs. Birgit snorkelled around the reef with Bec while I paddled Bess around on the SUP and Ian had a first attempt at the windsurfer sail on his board. The AFL gf was on the radio in the afternoon. The second day had us on the beach again in the afternoon, netting fish. There was the hope for more experiences at this bay, but the weather had other ideas.

I was up at 0600 and ready to go in minutes. There was a fuel tank to swap and crab traps to pack up. The port step locker had been emptied to get out the fish net, and all the buckets and containers would have to stay out in the cockpit, because we had to get out of there as quickly as we could.

All other boats except just one big motor yacht had already gone, and we were soon out in the bay getting under sail. The tide should have been already flooding, but there was a huge swell standing up in the current as we ran around the bottom of the island and set course for Billbob Bay. In our haste to leave, the port lights in the hull were not closed, and we soon had buckets of water sloshing around the floor of the port hull as the big waves found their way up to the open vent, wetting everything in the port cabin.

There were three other boats in the east half of Billbob, one taking the inside position, and the swell was getting well into the bay. We tried around at the western half unsuccessfully attempting to get in close enough to get out of the swell. So we were back again at the east anchorage in less than an hour after leaving Thomas. There we had breakfast, cleaned up and dried as best we could, and reconsidered options.

Around 1030, with the tide beginning to ebb, we set off to the north to find somewhere quieter. The wind was up to a consistent 15 knots from the NE for the run up to Dent Island, and we were getting along at up to 9 knots with the wind on the beam. Under the lee of Dent, the wind went north and lightened, but we had almost 2 knots of tide to help us along, so pushed on. Clear of Dent, the wind lifted back to the east again, and we were able to harden up and still make for Nara. We did throw in a tack, but that was only to cross over next to Katmando. I had spoken to Mark earlier in the day, and were expecting to see them pass out through Unsafe Passage on their way to Chance Bay.

We sailed almost into Nara Inlet, and then motored on to Refuge Bay where U4IA were waiting to come over for drinks.

#### **4 October, Airlie Beach**

Sailed in to Airlie getting ready for the next guests to come on board.

#### **5 October, Funnel Bay**

Moved around to Cannonvale for access to the VMR wharf. Bike shopping to Cannonvale. BCF, Harvey Norman, Hardware before moving again to the Public wharf in Abell Pt for water and pickup Mark and Annette.

Back out to anchor off Cannonvale. Walk to Coles for food.

Full moon sail around to Funnel Bay.

#### **6 October, Whitsunday Island, Gulnare Inlet**

Rolly anchorage. Sailed out and around to Unsafe Passage and then down to Henwood Island Escape Beach for high tide beach swim. Motor around to Gulnare.

#### **7 October, Shaw Island, Bay south of Neck**

Sail out of Gulnare, past P&O down between Dent and Hamo and on to Shaw. Beach swim at high tide in the middle of the day. Later moved two bays north for night anchorage.

#### **8 October, Shaw Island, Bay south of Neck**

Plan to circumnavigate Shaw. South to Burning Pt on flood tide. Change of tide off Billbob Bay. Motored in to Roberta Bay for high tide swim and plastic collection. Sailed north inside the islands off the east side of Shaw with the ebb tide, and back to where we started.



**9 October, Shaw Island, Neck Bay**

No wind. Motored over to Lindeman Island for a high tide swim and beach net. Motored over to Neck Bay for the anchorage.

**10 October, Thomas Island, Anchorage 2**

High tide sail in light conditions down to Thomas. Swim at high tide.

**11 October, Lindeman Island, Boat Port**

Snorkel at low tide mid morning. Swim and fishing at the high tide. Ebb tide assisted sail back to Boat Port, arriving just before sunset.

**12 October, Whitsunday Island, Hook Passage**

Walk on beach at Boat Port. Sail north to Chance Bay for high tide swim. Motored around to Whitehaven and motorsail north to Hook Passage.

**13 October, Cannonvale**

Beach walk early before heading in to town. At first no wind, but ended up being the best sail all week. Anchored off WSC for lunch before dropping Mark and Annette on the public wharf Abell Pt and Cannonvale anchorage. Evening at the marina Water Club with Bec and Ian off U4IA.

Bess was really weak and could not eat. Over the next few days her condition deteriorated further, and it was clear her death was imminent. We were able to discuss what to do next, and decided to move around to Cape Gloucester where we would be able to bury her at the spot where we caught squid with the other yachties last year.

### **18 October, Gloucester Passage**

Wind coming in from the NE bringing scattered showers. Sailed through wind and rain to Breakfast Bay in the morning. With the wind going E-SE we moved around to the Shag Island anchorage in the afternoon.

Sailed 4:04 at 5.4 max 9.7 over 22.2 against the tide.

Bess died here the next day, and we were not prepared to leave for some time after she was buried in the foreshore dunes.

### **26 October, Bowen**

Winds forecast to go north and this will be an uncomfortable anchorage. We couldn't decide what we are going to do, so just took the easy option, sailing over to Bowen.

Nice sail with wind on the beam. Hardened up coming into the south entrance and sailed right up to the harbour entrance. Anchored between entrance piles and wharf.



### **30 October, Bowen**

Up at first light to fill water. Motored into the harbour and tied up at the public wharf while we filled from our hose. Motored back out to the same anchorage.

### **1 November, Nara Inlet**

After the storm last evening, the wind in the S overnight and gave a rough night. Rum Doodle dragged their anchor and had to move in the height of the storm. We were up at first light and motored over to Stone Island, but the wind was too fickle and light. Anchored and had breakfast while waiting for the wind to fill in.

It was almost 1100 before we got going. Motored out the north entrance and sailed off on close reach for Gloucester Passage. Furled sails just outside the passage marker and motored in against the ebb tide and anchored off Montes beach and walked up to Bess' grave. At was 1330 and we had to hurry. The tide would be against us, and the weather was forecast to change. We had to get on down to the islands by night.

Motored out of the passage with main up and were able to set sail once out past Gloucester Island. We stayed high on the wind to clear Saddleback, and then eased away towards Armit. I was unclear about whether we would clear Double Cone but pushed on with the option, until at Armit, decided to use the now flooding tide to head a bit south and head for Nara.

A storm was building in the west, and the BOM radar image but looked to be going south of Proserpine.

Once clear of Double Cone, the wind dropped and then filled in from the east. The storm was getting closer and darker and more sinister. The heavy clouds in the west made nightfall come early. The storm was to the south of us, and the BOM image was showing it moving across Molle Islands and heading for Nara. It was extreme rain, showing as black on the BOM radar. Another cell developed further west and started raining over Airlie. At 1800 we dropped sails and started motoring towards Nara, still 9nm away.

Watching our radar we could see that the rain squall over Molle just blew out and vanished. The rain echo on the radar just faded away and was gone. The moon came out and we were able to follow a motor boat in front of us that was first identified on the radar. Anchored in Refuge Cove at the last safe anchorage.

### **3 November, Cid Hbr**

Sailed out of Nara without motors, and once clear were able to put in a nice sail under double head on close reach on stb tack. We had tide assistance, and the wind behaved as expected, freeing up as we headed south. At first we were heading to the west of Cid Is, but the wind shifted as we came past the end of Hook Is and ended up pointing up into Mays Bay. Dropped sails outside the harbour and recalibrated the RC42 rate compass under motor before heading in to Sawmill Beach for the anchor.

Had a swim on the beach while the tide was still full.

### **6 November, Tongue Inlet**

With no destination in mind, we sailed out of Cid without motor, and using the tide made good speed to the south. Going past Dent, we were making almost 10 knots SOG. Approaching Long Shoal, the wind shifted south, so we tacked east. We set Boat Port as a destination, where we had lunch and a quick trip to the beach for a walk. We had been here less than a month earlier, and it turned out that walk then was the last chance Bess had to walk the foreshore chasing fish.

After the walk we motored out around the east of Pentecost and set sail for Solway Passage. Easily sailed right through the passage and then along close in to Whitehaven Beach, identifying the entrance to Hill Inlet as we passed by at the bottom of the tide.

Picked up first mooring in Tongue Inlet.

### **7 November, Hill Inlet**

By 0800 the tide was high enough to get ashore. Walked to the lookout and used the height to draw sketches of the channels into Hill Inlet.

Back on board at 1000, we dropped the mooring and motored around to head in. High tide was after 1300, but with light N breeze and flat glassy sea it appeared safe enough to enter already.

Found 2.5m on the bar, although further south may have been slightly deeper. The channel was generally more than 3.0m but the cross over near the rocks dropped to 2.5m also.

### **11 November, Hook Passage**

High tide was around 1630. At 1530, we packed up and were quickly away. With the wind at more than 20 knots from the SE and the tide all but full, we motored around the long channel out of Hill Inlet and sailed north and on to Hook Passage under just genoa.

### **14 November, Macona Inlet**

Brisk sail under genoa alone with fresh S breeze. Sailed right up into Macona before motoring in to anchor well inside the bay.

### **17 November, Airlie Beach**

Sailed out of Macona, across through Unsafe Passage and on to Airlie.

### **19 November, Nara**

Windward sailing all day, first on stb tack till out mid passage, and then tacked down the passage until into Nara. Anchorage number 5.

Whilst out here, the desal high pressure pump failed. Decided we would have to go back to Airlie to top up water before we could head south.

### **24 November, Stonehaven**

Under genoa alone, sailed around Hook Island with gusty and shifting SE winds. Picked up mooring over in the north corner of the bay. Went to shore on beach for swim and checking hollow rocks under the headland.

### **25 November, Airlie Beach**

Left Stonehaven early and had a fast reach across to Airlie, arriving in time for the market opening.

Even fewer boats at Airlie than there were a week ago. Kind of spooky to be around with no one else here. Anchored right outside the sailing club rock walls.

### **30 November, Happy Bay, Long Island**

Went for swim at the lagoon and shopping in Airlie after breakfast, then back to the boat for early lunch before moving around to Abell Pt to top up the water. Government pontoon is being repaired, and the National Park boat was tied up at the public wharf. There was a Lagoon on the other side trying to repair their toilet, and didn't want to move. The NP skipper said he'd be 10

mins, so we waited, drifting and manoeuvring next to the wharf while they loaded up and moved out. Filled water and rinsed off. Birgit washed some clothes.

Moved out of the wharf at around 1430, with winds gusting over 25 we reefed the main and hoisted the staysail, pointing at around 40-45 until we were out in the Molle Passage, and then started tacking down to Happy Bay.

## **2 December, Homestead Bay, St Bees Island**

Up early with tide assistance and optimistic about the wind. Motored down out of Long Sound into the breeze, but with about 5 knots of current. Once out of the sound, we started tacking south. Two tacks had us out of the bay, and then one long tack along the coast inside Long Shoal, before tacking out again and picking up a favourable breeze.

We were first planning to stop at Goldsmith, and even dry out in the creek for a couple of days, but the breeze was so good that we kept going, and it carried us quickly as far as Brampton.

Through the afternoon, the wind kept backing on us, and by 1600 we were so far off course for any island that I furled up all sail and motored the 8nm across to St Bees. We went around the north end and into the channel, where the current carried us down to Homestead Bay. It was flooding hard, but close to full tide.

There were many other boats at Homestead, so we circled around, trying to stay out of the current but outside the reef, checking the satellite images, watching the depths and finally anchored in about 6m on what seemed to be flat bottom. Tide range is currently here is about 4m, and tide not high for another couple of hours.

## **3 December, West Bay, Percy Island**

At first glimmer of light, I was up for a pee, and found that we were surrounded by coral poking its head out of the surface all around us. "Out of bed! We're out of here! Urgent!"

By some miracle, it was dead calm, and the current had been holding us out and away from the reef. But still the anchor was in there amongst the coral. By the time we were able to get in over the anchor to lift it, there was exposed coral off each side of the boat and we had to reverse out.

Motored out the channel and set sail for Middle Percy Island. But the wind was so light and on the nose that we kept the motor running slowly.

At 0700 we were about to cross the main shipping channel into Hay Point when I noticed the bulk carrier "*lanthe*" coming in from out at sea. The AIS 10 minute ring was just ahead of our COG 10 minute ring. AIS said that we would pass behind by only a couple of hundred metres in 10 minutes time. And then we hear Hay Pt VTS on the radio talking to *lanthe*, saying that they would be landing a helicopter with the pilot on board at 0710, giving the coordinates.

And right on time, right in front of us, the helicopter circled and landed on the top of one of the cargo hatches, and left again without the pilot.

But that was the highlight of our day. Soon after the genoa was furled and we continued with motor and main up till 1300, when the wind freed enough for us to sail again with genoa, and by 1400 had the motor off at last. By 1630 we were anchored at West Bay on Percy, had a feed, and headed in for sundowners.

### **5 December, Hunter Island**

One complication for going south was a closure of the Shoalwater Bay area with war games being conducted. It would have been nice to use Supply Bay as a halfway point.

It seemed that the weather was going far enough east for us to make for Island Head. The plan was to let the flooding tide carry us west as we sailed south and then the ebb tide should carry us out around Cape Townsend and south.

### **6 December, Island Head Creek**

With the weather again calm early morning, and the tide flooding in to Broad Sound, we were in no hurry to leave. Started the day with a swim, a walk to the top of the hills and another swim. Stunning vista of Lola Mantes channel and the whole Duke group opens up from the top of the hills.

With winds at less than 10 knots from the west, we left Hunter with main and motor at 1130 and had the motor off by 1200 as we cleared Danger Island.

Over the ext 2 hours, we went from genoa to spinnaker on stb tack, back to genoa, and then spin on port tack. With the tide still just flooding, the intention was to head south towards Shoalwater Bay and then use the ebb to get us around to the south.

By 1400 we were making better than 5kts being able to carry course 10 degrees above Cape Townsend with the big spinnaker in flat and tight to the wind and the tide helping. The TWA was less than 110, so the AWA was well under 90.

Until we passed Cape Townsend at 1530, the wind freshened and we had the spinnaker pulled out flat. The tack was pulled down to both bows, the tack off to windward, so that the luff flew forward of the headstay, tight and straight. Sheeted in tight, we had the autopilot in wind mode set at 76° while making 8kts.

Just south of the Cape, the winds backed and dropped, and it was really touch and go whether we could continue on with spinnaker to the south. But we rode the shifts and made it around the headlands, and later won a lift that carried us right down to Island Head. We had the sails down at 1730 and motored up into the creek and were anchored at 1800.

The intention was to stay on in the morning, fishing on the flood tide and then using the afternoon ebb to get us into GKI in the dark.

### **7 December, Fishermans Beach, Great Keppel Island**

With such distance to Great Keppel, and winds light, we left early to make the most of the daylight hours. Yesterday's breeze dropped in the early evening, and it seemed likely to repeat again today.

So I was up at 0435 and checking weather. The wind was light from the north; around 5 knots, and all the other boats were heading out with the last of the ebb tide. I woke Bibi at 0455 and we were getting the anchor up at 0505, and on the bar at 0530. We drifted along with main and spinnaker, and spent most the morning tweaking it all get an extra 0.1kt out of it.

As we headed south, we spotted a boat coming out of Pearl Bay. It had to be the same one that we were caught up to last night, just we were pulling down the sails. It had a distinctive high aspect main and really small jib. This boat was sailing all over the place, and ended up going out to sea across our bows. As it was going really slowly, with the sails sheeted in tight despite the wind being from dead astern, we soon overtook them. But next thing, here it comes, roaring in from out at sea at full speed under motor. It's the damaged Adams that we helped back at Airlie a month ago. Bloke on his own, comes steaming up and comes alongside and hails "Where can I get fuel?". "Closest around here will be Roslyn Bay", I respond. I couldn't believe he answers "Where's that?". "Down the coast 40 or 50 nms" seems like the most sensible answer. "Is that past Fraser Island?" he asks. WTF? "Do you have a chart? Any maps?" Negative, negative. "Well just follow the coast. The marina is just near a big rocky headland. You'll see houses and a town, and the masts in the marina" I tell him. "Thanks", and off he goes again at full power.

Through the morning the winds drop and pick up, but we continue on under spinnaker, knowing that the tide and winds will later help. As we approached Cape Manifold, we were catching up to our out of fuel friend, but when we turned the corner, he kept following the coast while we made course for GKI.

The spinnaker run down from Mainfold was fast. For the last few hours, we were going so hard I didn't trust the autopilot, and took over. We dropped the spinnaker just short of Middle Island, and sailed through the gap and into Fishermans under main and genoa, dropping those at the last possible moment.

Today we sailed for 11:15, averaging 5.0 with max at 10.1 over 56.3nm.

### **10 December, Svendsens Beach, Great Keppel Island**

GKI welcomed us back with clear water. This is the first clear water we have seen since leaving here to go north. We enjoyed this by swimming on the shore, going for walks along the beaches, and exploring around to Monkey Beach. We were rewarded on our early morning walk to Leekes Creek with a find of cans of bourbon and dry washed up on the beach.

After a few nights at Fishermans, the winds were going more south and roll was coming around the end of the island and in to the anchorage, so we moves around to Svendsens. With a brisk SE breeze, we sailed off the anchor under genoa and through the reef and around to Leekes. Furled up and motored in to an anchorage over the sand.

This was ok at first, but as the week drew on towards the new moon, the tide range increased, and we woke early morning 14 December as we were gently touching bottom at the bottom of the tide. I pushed us out a bit with one motor and the wind then held us out for the next hour as the tide rose and I waited to make sure we were ok. Next day, we moved into the gutter off Second Beach near to Svendsen's mooring bouy.

### **17 December, Leekes Creek, Great Keppel Island**

From the gutter off Second Beach, we observed the tide start to fall, so started in on both motor soon after 0900. Working against the current gave better control entering the narrow passage between rocks and sand at the mouth of the creek. After anchoring, I ran out two stern anchors in the dinghy, and tied another line from the bow to the mangroves.

The soft sand caused us to sink deep at low tide, so we moved with each tide over the time here, shuffling back and forth to get the best position.

### **20 December, Fishermans Beach, Great Keppel Island**

After 3 nights up the creek, we had completed a few jobs and had enough of the midges. It was time to go.

As well as giving the bottom a good scrub, we were able to make repairs to the bridgedeck stringers (where the dinghy has been banging into it at the back) and the underside of the catwalk stringer.

I was up early to use the low tide. I retrieved the stern anchors, washing them and stowing them, saving the work of lifting them later with the dinghy. After breakfast, the tide had risen enough to head upstream in the dinghy to retrieve the 4 crab pots, one of which had another large estuary cod. And by the time the pots were washed and stowed and the dinghy brought up, we were afloat.

Once afloat, I first shortened the chain, but the wind against tide action was either going to push us into the mangroves or run chain under a hull, so we used both motors to manoeuvre over the anchor and pick it up, move down into the main channel and reanchor. While waiting for a bit more water in the creek, everything was stowed, and by the time we were ready to leave, the short length of anchor was dragging in the current, so it was time to go.

Out the creek on both motors. These were both soon off, and we sailed around to Fishermans under genoa alone in about 5kt breeze from the NE.

As soon as we were anchored, we were visited by Mark and Jaz off Veritas, and Jimmy from the creek. After lunch, we ventured ashore to figure how to



buy a couple of drums of petrol for the outboard, but as we were getting back on board, Charlie of KiaOra was ringing to say that he had fuel for me and to come over for pizzas. We had a lovely evening on board with Charlie and Donna, and also Dennis and Edie off Teurian and Jimmy.

### **21 December, Masthead Island**

I was up 0445 to check the forecast, and it looked like there was enough north in the breeze. I woke Birgit and we were underway at 0530. Around the bottom of the island, the wind was free and fresh, and we made good progress in the first hour, reaching out to the east. By 0630 we were up to 45 onto the breeze, and seemed to be making good progress towards Masthead Island. It was chosen as the desired destination for the day.

Through the morning the breeze was fresh, averaging better than 10kts, but by 1100 it had dropped and headed on us, so we motor-sailed with the genoa in tight and the autopilot set to 33. But soon that too failed, and we ended up motoring under main by noon, and all through the afternoon, on course for Masthead.

It was a beautiful arrival at Masthead at around 1530, but there were odd clouds and showers that were making it difficult to make out the bottom in only 6m depth at low tide. There were many isolated bombies surrounded by isolated heads of coral poking out of the sand in the clear water. After an hour of going up and back and up again, we settled on a small patch of sand to centre the anchor into, hoping the chain wouldn't foul, and with the objective of getting out of bed and moving on if the wind freshened during the night.

We were hungry and tired, and had a feed of sausage and veg before rolling into bed by dark.

### **22 December, Fitzroy Reef**

Checking on conditions through the night, the wind was light and in the SE. When I was up at 0300 for a pee, it seemed there was a bit more north in the breeze. I went back to bed but couldn't sleep, so had Birgit up at 0330 and we had the anchor up at 0345. There was already a glint of light in the east, and by 0400 you could see everything.

Again, the breeze was good, giving us 5nm in the first hour, on course for Lady Musgrave. But with sunrise soon after 0600, the wind seemed to die with the sun, and headed us as it swung more to the south.

At 0645, we furled up the genoa and set course for Fitzroy Reef under tight main and stb motor.

By 1110 we were anchored in a lovely big patch of sand under the eastern side of the reef in the clearest water we have ever seen.

After first a survey by dinghy, we later had a snorkel with Dan and Mo off Sam in the afternoon, and then drinks on SBZ later, also with Christine's Andrea and John.



### **Fitzroy Reef**

Dinghy motor repaired after draining fuel, clean plug but then replace plug. The cleaned plug was trying to cross thread the head.

### **23 December, Lady Musgrave Island**

No wind, motored the whole way



### **Lady Musgrave Island**

### **25 December, Rooney Pt Fraser Island**

After a really full Xmas Day, we set off from LMI late afternoon.



**Diving with turtle Dec 25**

After being calm through the day, a light northerly started up mid afternoon. We motored with main out the lagoon and out to the eastern end of LM reef before getting up the genoa for a while and then spinnaker until sunset.

Sailed through the night, and arrived at Rooney soon after daylight the next morning.



**Arrival at Rooney Point Dec 26**

**26 December, Wathumba Creek Fraser Island**

Sailed off the anchor in about 5kt N breeze and ran w+w down along the island for the first 5nm before the wind started going everywhere. Managed to sail right up to the mouth of the creek, and motored in at the top of the tide.



**Anchored in Wathumba Creek**

### **30 December, Garrys Anchorage Fraser Island**

The boat had just settled onto the rudders as the tide was dropping at sunset last night. This gave me the chance to retrieve the stern anchors have everything stowed before dark. Through the night, the tide dropped till around midnight, and we started to float again at 0330.

### **31 December, Tin Can Bay**

Sailed off the anchor again, and down through the channel at Garrys under just genoa. Once out in the main channel, the main came up too, and carried us down to Tin Can Inlet, where the ebb tide running at 2 knots was too much. Furled up, planning to anchor, but found that we could hold position with the genoa alone in the light northerly. After a couple of hours, the tide had eased, so we motored for a while. Found that the current diminished close to the western drop off as we approached the sweeping bend around to TCB. Sailed again, through the moorings and right up to where we anchored, just off Crab Creek.

Went ashore in the afternoon after a short storm and shower of rain, but had to hurry back with an approaching storm that appeared quite threatening. The storm hit soon after we were back on board, and with the winds came enough rain to fill our water tanks.

## **6 January 2018, Pelican Bay**

We had a 4Cs bbq at the gazebo yesterday afternoon, and met quite a few new yachties that call TCB home.

There was no wind early, so we had to wait till 0900 to get moving, but the tide was flooding by then. With the tide holding the boat stern to wind, we got the anchor up without the motors, and then set the genoa for a slow sail down the channel. We again sailed through the moorings, coming up into the wind to get around the corner near Snapper Creek where we sailed close by Lance and Trish on Euphoria, and then a nice reach down to Inskip Pt. Came up into the wind to point up into Pelican Bay, and then furled up and motored the last mile in.

Anchored at 25°49.16S 153°03.91E having travelled for 2:30 at an average of 3.4. But the tide was around 2 knots. Over ground we travelled 8.5nm but 12.1 through the water.

Sundowners planned with Sam were postponed when Birgit was sick.

## **8 January 2018, Mooloolaba**

Hoping that an early start would see enough water on the bar to use the Fishermans Gutter, we were up at 0400 and anchor up at 0430. At 0450 we were in the channel heading out, getting flushed with the tide. At sunup at 0510, we were at the point of commitment with the gutter, but there seemed to be a strong current running north through the gutter causing waves to go everywhere, so we continued on using the marked channel down the mad mile. With the tide against the swell, the waves were mad, so we were lucky they were so small and the seas calm. Even so, we had green water over the front deck a number of times.

0550 had us clear of the bar, and by 0600 we were heading for Double Island Point with a light easterly breeze. By 0630 the flat spinnaker was out and we were reaching nicely and more than 4 knots in the light air. The breeze was shifting through more than 20° and only 4-6 TWS so we were on autopilot in wind mode and making almost wind speed. But by 0830 the wind was so light that we had to pull down the sail and start motoring. After an hour of motoring on the stb motor at 2000rpm at 5.3kts, we were again sailing by 0930. For the next hour or so the wind was really shifty, but it was so light that we had to ignore the current to get out the spinnaker to make the most of the light air. Staying as shy as possible, we were pointing at around Noosa and hoping for a lift to get us out and around the point.

As forecast, the breeze went north and strengthened through the day. At 1300 we were sitting on more than 7 knots for extended periods, having travelled 11.4 in the past two hours but went 15.2 in the next two hours.

Sails were down at 1600 and over the bar at 1610. It took three attempts to get satisfied with the anchorage and 1650 by the time we were packed up. By

then we had been travelling 11:48 at 5.5 and 10.1 max, having travelled 64.6nm but only 61.5 through the water.

### **10 January 2018, Newport Quays**

With no wind early, we didn't move until 1130. Instead had an early surf.

The wind was light and we needed the spinnaker to make speed. With the autopilot set at 90° apparent and the spinnaker flat, we made from Mooloolaba to Skirmish Pt without changing the sails. Coming around Skirmish, we beared away until a gybe was required, and then dropped the genoa and reset it stb tack. Up again, it was a really fast reach across the bottom of Bribie to the turning point, where we were able to bear away to DDW for the last run to Newport. There were two other boats in the pond at the Quays.

Sailed 6:10 at 6.2 and max 9.7. Travelled 38.9nm and 37.3 through the water.



### **Sailing down Moreton Bay**

#### **11 January 2018, Brisbane**

Isabella and Chris drove out for breakfast with Tiger. Isabella needed to be on shore in Brisbane before 1600, so around 1000 we sent Chris off with the car. At 1015 we were on our way out the canals. Had to motor-sail out almost to Redcliff to make it around the rocks without tacking, and had the spinnaker out when we rounded the corner. Soon the wind had freshened so much that we had to go back to genoa, and then as we headed into the channel at the river entrance, the main came down too. We were able to sail all the way up the river till past the Sydney St wharf at New Farm, and then motored the last bit up to the piles. But when we arrived at the piles, the tide was still running out and with the wind from the north, it was impossible to safely tie up to, so we anchored across off Kangaroo Pt in order to drop Isabella ashore. The tide turned and we went back over to the piles and tied up with the tide slack.

We travelled 4:50 at 5.9 with max 12.9, covering 28.3nm and 31.1 through the water.



**Figure Brisbane Botanical Gardens piles**

### **21 January 2018, Jumpinpin**

Up at 0530 to get ready to drop lines at slack water. Had to extend all the lines to allow us to let go from the boat. At slackwater at 0600 we were away, and again motored down to Sydney St where we were able to get out the genoa for a slow sail into the flood tide.

On two occasions on the river, we had to start a motor to be able to point up and avoid tacking against the tide, but otherwise was able to sail all the way down the river with the SE wind.

Once out into the bay, we hardened up into the wind and headed out between Mud and St Helena. As we went further down the bay, the was lifting but dropping in strength, and by the time we were east of Manly, the wind dropped completely. With no destination in mind, we were happy to sit and flounder until the wind came in again. But we would have been there all day, until it was noticed that there was a boat only  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile to the south of us sailing quite fast. We could see the ripples on the water, but the line between the ripples and the glass that surrounded us was not moving, so we had to motor over into the breeze before we could continue sailing again.

The wind was too light to be able to point as high as we needed, and with the ebb tide running to the north against us, eventually we had a tack a couple of times before heading to the east of Macleay Island and down the Canaipa Channel. Heading down the channel was tight, and again we resorted to motor a couple of times when the wind was unfavourable for a particular reach of the passage. Near Walleys Gutter we saw the Sarah called Elan anchored and gave them a toot. Soon after we decided to motor on and get to Jumpinpin for the night because there the wind would be perpendicular to the tides and avoid the wind against tide dance that would have been inevitable in Canaipa.



Touched bottom on the channel cross over at the slipping sands. It was the bottom of the tide, and we were motor sailing with just main. Immediately we dropped the sail and were then able to gently motor through the sand and continue on to Jumpinpin. Exhale were anchored just down from our spot, but it was almost dark and too late to say hello.

### **22 January 2018, Southport**

As forecast, there was no wind early. Trevor and Fiona came over for a cuppa. Did a few jobs. Cooked up a feed ready to head south. Eventually the wind went around to a bit north of east, and we sailed off the anchor and down to the Gold Coast.

### **24 January 2018, Yamba**

It was forecast that the winds would begin light and variable, and maybe even a bit offshore. I was up at 0400 and checked the weather and the 0410 forecast. It all looked ok, so we were on our way by 0430. With the lights of the city and the channel markers, we easily slipped out the seaway with a few runabouts before first light, and began motor sailing out wide of Tweed.



**Leaving the Gold Coast**