

## **AHOY! COCKATOO II**

## **AUGUST 2007 UPDATE.**

Nearing the end of August 2007, marks almost three years since we threw the mooring ropes off from Fremantle Sailing Club and headed off into the sunset on our new adventure.

We have made it to sunny Queensland and are currently cruising the beautiful Whitsunday Islands.



Sunset at Brampton Island, Queensland.

The trip up was an interesting trip due to weather conditions, but overall the weather did come from the south enabling us to sail rather than beat into to it. We also managed to cross most bars along the NSW coast going into the most delightful anchorages.

Places we went to were-Tuncurry-Forster, Camden Haven, Port Macquarie, Trial Bay, Coff's Harbour, North Solitary Island, Clarence River, Ballina, Scarborough, Southport, Brisbane, Tangalooma, Mooloolabar, Great Sandy Strait, Bundaberg, Pancake Creek, Gladstone, The Narrows, Cape Capricorn, Yellow Patch, Great Keppel Island, Percy Island, Scawfell Island, Brampton Island, Cape Hillsborough, Goldsmith Island, Thomas Island, Shaw Island, Lindeman Island, Whitsunday Island, Airlie Beach.

We missed seeing Port Clinton, Pearl Bay and Island Head Creek due to the defence forces closing this area off due to military exercises. This meant there was a long trip around the area totalling 98.5nm a total of 17 hours in all.



Forster Tuncurry we met up with other cruisers heading north and had a cruiser's BBQ on the shore.

Paul is cooking dinner most nights and is quite a dab hand in the galley. His specialty is steak and fish. Provisioning has been easy along the coast as everywhere we anchor there are shops to buy bread and fresh fruit. Best time is when there are local markets selling their produce, it stays fresh for longer and tastes better than the major shops.



Laurieton was a lovely township, the United Servicemen's Club jetty allows a visiting yacht to stay for three days. There is water but no power and very cheap meals at the United Servicemen's Club. We climbed the top of North Brother Mountain with Mary and Peter from Tahaa as you can see the lookout is spectacular, showing the Camden Haven bar and if you look closely you can see us tied up at the jetty.

One of our most favourite places is the Clarence River. This is a place that seems frozen in time (except for Yamba), there are little town sites where the main buildings are the Post Office and the pub. We explored this great river as far up as Grafton.

We met Col and Jan (ex cruisers) living at Brushwood and in exchange for Paul fixing their mobile home we got a flight in a light aircraft seeing the river from above, Paul getting at chance at the controls.



On the Clarence river we met up with Indali who left Fremantle before us and taught them how to play 500's. They were organising some repairs and Paul helped in the removal of their mast.

Cruising up the river Paul approached a local trawler and



purchase fresh prawns which we ate that evening.

The weather always brings surprises, here is us at anchor just off Grafton on the Clarence River in 40 knots of wind. Paul rescued a boat during this storm that broke its mooring.



In Maclean, there is a free jetty with power and water that one is allowed to stay for five days and is just at the bottom of the main street, a great place to reprovision.

Maclean is the NSW Scottish town and when we saw the Fraser Clan colours on a post, Sam and I had our photo taken. (My maiden name)

Sam has since graduated from the Navy as a seaman and is doing a further year study in Melbourne in the Navy.

At Ballina we had the opportunity to go to Alan and Ella's Macadamia farm where we learnt how to sort Macadamia nuts. An absolutely beautiful place and great company.

We had a great send off with Ella and Alan waving us off at the breakwater leaving Ballina.



Sailing up the NSW coast passing Cape Byron, the eastern most point in Australia, our destination was Tweed Heads. We could see on the horizon the Gold Coast, which you could see it for miles so with good winds 10-20 knots we continued on anchoring in Bum's Bay Southport just after sunset.



Maintenance, maintenance, maintenance it seems never ending. Thank goodness Paul is such a handy man. Here he is welding a plate for the alternator on our backboard at Bum's Bay. During this period we have had the new genset repaired under warranty as the heat exchanger was faulty, The Alternator fan belts replaced, Oil changes on the motor, Water-maker filters cleaned, Exhaust heat shield installed, Waterproofed the bilmini, Increased the size of the battery charger wires, sent the wind sensor off for replacement, installed new LED cabin lights, changed the oil filters, replaced the hatch seals, restitched the Genoa stitching and restitched the dingy cover. And of course rust chasing and painting.

About time for that drink I think.



Entering Brisbane Harbour, Big ships everywhere.

The Storey Bridge, we anchored just near Brisbane Botanical Gardens and could walk into the city. We spent time with Samantha while we were here, meeting Jo and Steve and family and her friends before she joined the Navy.





This is an interesting Queensland phenomenon-the dingy wharf.

It is a jetty devoted entirely to dinghies and one has to force ones way to the jetty to tie up as there are so many dinghies using it.

At Airlie Beach we pay \$1 per day at the Whitsunday Sailing Club to use the dinghy jetty and showers. What a bargain.

After Brisbane we departed with Marites and headed for Tangalooma where we anchored next to the wrecks used as a breakwater. Here we walked the lovely white beaches (when it was not cold and wet) and scrubbed the bottom of the dingy clean-more maintenance.



Coco is now a ships cat. She still does not like sailing all that much (spends it asleep in the cockpit) but on days that it is calm she gets up and about. She is our hot water bottle snuggling in during the cold weather keeping us warm.

Fraser Island, we crossed Wide Bay Bar anchoring at Gary's anchorage (where we saw a dingo on the beach) and caught up again with Huon Mist again-last seen in Tasmania. Here is a photo of Paul at Mackenzie's Wharf. Beautiful white sand but soooo!! cold, there was mist coming off the water in the morning. We were in jumpers, ugg boots and even put the heater on a few times. Much more of this weather I was getting the thermals out. Weren't we in sunny Queensland?



At 20 degrees 30 minutes is Cape Capricorn which is located on the Tropic of Capricorn. We had a celebratory drink to mark that very occasion. We climbed to the lighthouse erected in 1875 and inspected the tramway with a gradient of 1-7 used to haul supplies and equipment up from the beach.



We were woken up by a small blipping in the middle of the night, thinking it was a battery dying in one of the kitchen appliances we pulled the place apart, -finding nothing-we now suspect it was a sub pinging our hull, as there were military exercises nearby and it did not last all that long and has not occurred again. Hmm a mystery.

Yellow Patch, just around from Cape Capricorn at the top of Curtis Island. A most interesting site with a huge patch of yellow/red sand. Entry into this anchorage is interesting as it is sand channels which move constantly and one must enter at high tide as it is shallow in areas. Once in there is enough depth to anchor. We were fortunate in that there were fisherman buoys showing the way in, not indicated on or charts. Two days after we left someone cut the buoys loose. There has to be someone to spoil it for others



Paul and Craig (Solan) making the sign to place at West Bay at the Percy Hilton. Ashore there is a large A frame hut where cruisers have been hanging their names and dates. A most interesting place where we spent a lot of time, having a picnic lunch and then a BBQ ashore with other cruisers who arrived. A fishing boat came in with a huge fillet which he shared with us all-yum!.

The Whitsunday's and fair weather at last. Some of the islands have lovely white sand and the water is crystal clear and the most beautiful blue. I expected low lying sandy islands but the Whitsunday's consist of high wooded hilly islands with small beaches of sand, or mud, or coral or rock.





We are Aunty and Uncle again. Welcome Alex to the world, shown here with proud father Lee. He is a very handsome nephew and we hope he is not too old before we can cuddle him. Hannah you look after him as you are the big sister.

Paul and I at the top of Lindeman Island, which we climbed with Lee and Sandra from Huon Mist. It was a windy day but still the view atop was totally breathtaking- 360 degree views.



Tamara was able to visit us for four days and we saw Cid Harbour and Macona Bay, as we were dogging strong south Easterly winds. We picked Tamara up via dinghy from Hamilton Island airport. How many kids can say that?? It was a shame the weather was not better for her but it was lovely to spend time with our now grown up daughter who is considering going back to university next year.



Here is Col and Di's (Esoteric) family, five kookaburras in a tree. (Isn't there a song about that?) Col was away working when we arrived at Airlie Beach and Di invited us over for dinner, we had a lovely time and I got to have a long soak in her bath.

Col and Di kindly gave us the use of their car to drive to Mackay and we ended up having a beautiful roast dinner at their home upon our return.

Di and I even attended a life drawing class with a live model. Good fun and interesting to watch how local politics works (or doesn't). Di is very artistic and makes pearl jewellery which she makes on the boat and sells at the local markets as well as looking after injured wildlife.



Cape Hillsborough saw us staying on land with Graham and Meredith from Stray Cat where they are renovating their house. The property is right next to the National Park and the main industry is sugar cane farming. Stray Cat is on the hard- once the house is complete they intend to continue sailing. Graham took us for a tour of MacKay, Luna Quays and Airlie beach which was really great as it helped us know where to go once we sailed up there

It was great being on a farm with cattle, calves, and a hot shower and lots of champagne and great company.



Did I tell you about maintenance-here is Paul with the industrial sewing machine repairing the dingy cover. We bought the machine after spending two days hand-sewing the genoa.



And of course there is still the day to day to do-such as washing day and airing the bedding and cushions, it is a sight to behold a yacht covered in clothes and linen.

Mum and Dad have returned from land cruising, they travelled approx. 8,000kms on some of Len Beadells outback roads and crossed approx. 800 sand dunes on the Canning Stock Route,

Ian (Paul's dad) had injured his knee, fallen over and smashed his knee cap on a kerb, which stopped him driving for a while. He is mending well.



November 3 we are both flying to the USA to meet up with Paul's mates who all turn 50 this year. We are sailing on Graham's yacht on Chesapeake Bay before we go off exploring America on our own returning on the 3 November, Wish we where still that young

We hope to find work during the cyclone season and Danielle and Chris will be in Cairns during Dec/Jan. Can't wait to see them as it has been over a year since we last saw them in Melbourne.

Please do keep in contact as we look forward to hearing of your news and happenings.

Take care and fair winds

Paul and Tracy

Cockatoo II