

## Across the Ocean with our Trailer Sailer – Part 2

Having arrived in Devonport a week ago on the Spirit of Tasmania with Silhouette in tow; **Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> Feb.** saw us, with friends Sue & Peter Rochford and Sue Graham in Son-i-atu on the road again, leaving behind memorable experiences of beautiful Macquarie Harbour and the Gordon River. Our destination was Hobart, from where we planned to explore the D'Entrecasteaux Channel. Our bible for the cruise was "D' Entrecasteaux Waterways" published by Department of Primary Industries, Water and Environment with the help of the Cruising Yacht Club of Tasmania. We also had the appropriate charts kindly lent to us by Ron and Ruth (Tainui).

The journey via Queenstown on the west coast to Hobart was a rugged and spectacular one - narrow and steep roads, winding through rugged and mountainous scenery - not a road you would normally choose to travel with a 28 foot boat in tow but apart from a ripped tyre on the trailer which we were lucky enough to be able to change at a rest stop, the trip was uneventful taking about 7 hours with breaks, including an hour for lunch at a designated picturesque river park on the Franklin.



Enroute through the west coast

We were pleased to finally reach the Bellerive Yacht club which we had been advised by those who had gone before us as a good launching spot for the Channel. We had also made contact with the club before leaving Melbourne. People there were most helpful and very friendly and the facilities great with places to provision close by, including a butcher to vacuum seal our meat. Despite the best of plans before setting out, when we arrived at Bellerive, they were unsure if they would have room for our cars and trailers on the following weekend as they were hosting a major trailer boat regatta (They were keen to help us find somewhere else but this was difficult as we had arrived at the weekend and marina offices were closed.)

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup>** saw us traveling south to Margate (in 40 degree heat) to check out the launching facilities there (Margate is on North West Bay - a large & open expanse of water 18 kilometers south of Hobart). The ramp was excellent with a good jetty alongside and the facility was used mostly by fishermen in their big motorboats. There was a park, playground and kiosk adjacent and the kiosk owner thought our cars would be safe left in the carpark. There was water available at the ramp and fuel about  $\frac{1}{2}$  kilometer away up on the main road. The only disadvantage of the ramp was that it was quite exposed and could be difficult for retrieval in wild weather. The advantage of retrieving there was that you would not have the distance to travel up the Derwent River to get back to Hobart in order to start the journey back to the ferry. We decided to take the risk and returned to Bellerive to get ready for launching next day.

**Monday 19<sup>th</sup>** was a cooler day, having been helped by welcome rain overnight and after some last minute provisioning; we set off once again to Margate, boats in tow.



**Launching ramp at Margate**

Conditions were good for launching with just a slight breeze and after buying fuel, rigging, filling our water tanks and enjoying lunch we launched the boats and set off for one of the Channel's best known, picturesque and sheltered bays - Barnes Bay. On our way into Barnes Bay we experienced the first of many fish farms, (one being moved to another location by tug) that are prevalent in the Channel. They are not a pretty sight and one has to be vigilant to navigate at a safe distance from them. Barnes Bay is tucked deep into Bruny Island and offers shelter in all conditions - we chose to go right into the anchorage to enjoy the calm and serenity of "The Duck Pond" in the far south east corner. It was a delightful spot with farmland on one side and bushland on the other with a small sandy beach. Because it was not a weekend we enjoyed the anchorage with only one other boat, and at Happy Hour enjoyed with our friends on Soniatu, we decided to head south while the weather was good.



**A fish farm in tow**

**Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup>** began cool and cloudy so we motored out of the Duck Pond to begin our journey south to Port Esperance. After motoring for two hours we were just north of Isthmus Bay and decided to sail in the 5 knot breeze available to us. In these calm conditions we enjoyed lunch before slowly enjoying the onset of the forecast southerly change which crept up to 15 knots allowing us a great sail in the now sunny conditions. Port Esperance was named in 1793 after the ship "Esperence" which was one of two vessels (the other being "Recherche") commanded by the Frenchman Bruni D'Entrecasteaux who discovered the Channel. The area was first opened up by whalers in the early 1800's, and now hosts large areas of marine farming. We decided that the southerly anchorage at Rabbit Island offered the most protection for the night and we enjoyed a beautiful sunset during happy hour after stretching our legs with a bushwalk along the shore road on the mainland.



**Anchorage behind Rabbit Island**

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup>** - we left our snug anchorage in misty conditions to motor to the public jetty at Dover - a pretty little town at the head of Port Esperance. While the jetty was rather crowded with fishing vessels we managed to find a place to tie up to get fuel and water. It was a bit of a climb from the boat to the top of the jetty as the tide was low and we decided that good advice for any prospective Tassie cruisers would be to bring a ladder, as we experienced the need to climb

up onto jetties on quite a few occasions during our trip. Another handy piece of equipment (which we didn't have) would be a board to come alongside jetties as they were often rough and covered with shell fish. While diesel was available at the jetty, unleaded fuel was not, so after making enquiries Peter was offered a new F250 truck by a trusting local to drive to the nearby service station to fill his fuel containers. (Just another example of outstanding Tasmanian hospitality!) Leaving Dover, we sailed back across the Channel in a 10 knot northeasterly to Great Taylors Bay on South Bruny Island. We chose Mickeys Bay on the eastern side, to anchor which provided us with a "Whitsunday like" anchorage with clear blue waters and sandy beaches to enjoy. The scenery was being affected by a large uncontrolled bush fire that was burning in the distance on Bruny Island and covering the surrounding district with smoke. Later in the day we took the dinghy to the southern shore to look for a track to Cloudy Bay Lagoon on the south coast of Bruny Island. In this we were unsuccessful but we enjoyed the forest walk none the less.

**Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup>** - Our plan for the day was to walk to the South Bruny Light but as it was drizzling when we arose we had a leisurely breakfast of bacon and eggs, and postponed our departure to the anchorage at lighthouse jetty beach on the southern shore of Great Taylors Bay until late morning.

After setting two anchors in line (in case the wind turned to the north as it had been forecast to do ) we set off with our coats and a packed lunch to walk the four kilometers to the old Light. It was a pleasant walk along a well made 4WD track (Old Jetty Road) and on reaching the top we were treated to stunning views of the coastline and the Southern ocean.



View from the lighthouse



South Bruny Light

South Bruny Light was established in 1838, built by convict labour from locally quarried rock, after three ships had been wrecked in D'Entrecasteaux Channel during 1935. It's a lovely old building, well preserved, and only decommissioned in 1996. We sat on a garden seat beside the light and enjoyed the views while we ate lunch before enjoying the downhill walk back to the beach and onto our boats. We returned to Mickeys Bay overnight. **Friday 23<sup>rd</sup>** - Sue and Peter on Soni-a-tu wanted to spend some time exploring on land, so with Sue Graham on board Silhouette, we set off in a 10-15 knot northeasterly, to enjoy a pleasant sail to Southport back on the mainland. We headed towards the public jetty being careful to avoid the kelp beds present within the bay. We had wondered about exploring further into the bay through "The Narrows" which used to be dredged to allow barges through to Ida Bay limestone quarries, but a local fisherman advised against it as it had silted up since dredging ceased. From the jetty we walked inland for about  $\frac{1}{2}$  kilometer to the general store for milk and bread, enjoying the wild blackberries growing along the side of the road. We chose Deephole Bay on the south side of Southport for our overnight anchorage. Sue and I filled in the

afternoon with a 40 minute walk to Southport Lagoon, on a sometimes hidden and overgrown track.



Tied up to the jetty at Southport

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup>** - we woke to hear a strong wind warning forecast so decided to make our way back to Port Esperence before we had to battle strong winds and seas. We motor sailed with a reefed main and arrived at Stringers Cove within Port Esperence at about 10.30 to anchor and cook bacon and eggs for a belated breakfast. Later we motored over to the Dover Pub jetty to meet up with Soni-a-tu, and arrange a shower and dinner at the hotel. We enjoyed a coffee in town and decided to swap dinghies with Soni-a-tu as ours was a borrowed inflatable and we were always worried about damaging it on the rocky shores with the abundant shellfish. We enjoyed a lovely meal in the hotel dining room before returning to the boat to spend the night on the jetty.

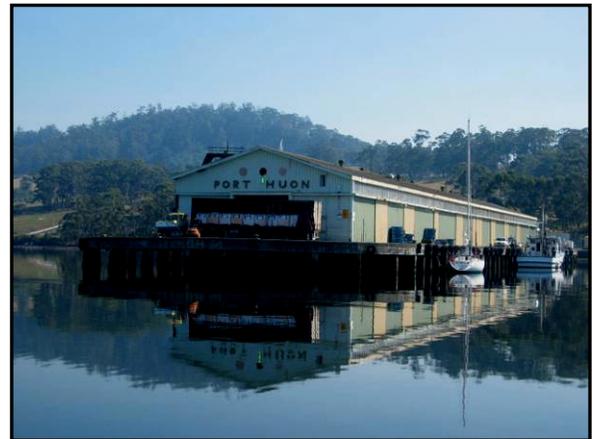


Dover Hotel and Jetty

**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup>** - before leaving Dover we strolled into town to buy fresh bread, Steve harvested

an entrée of mussels and oysters and we topped up our water supply at the wharf. We continued our journey north sailing in brisk south westerlies to Cygnet Bay where we anchored in rural surroundings on the sheltered west side in Copper Alley Bay. We spent a quiet afternoon enjoying this very quiet anchorage.

**Monday 26<sup>th</sup>** - We left Copper Alley Bay in cool, calm, drizzly conditions to motor all the way to Port Huon up the Huon River, on glassy smooth waters. We cruised past the significant wharf which is now seldom used for commercial purposes, where we observed loads of fish food being unloaded to service the local fish farms.



Port Huon

We had decided to anchor near the head of the bay just outside the moorings, when a local skipper offered us the use of a free mooring for the night. We thanked him and happily accepted his offer. After lunch we used the dinghy to motor over to the marina following the dredged channel. The material dumped after dredging didn't enhance the surrounds of the marina! Tying up we walked to the local Trading Post where we enjoyed coffee (best iced coffee I've had!) before returning to the boat for a quiet night. There is also a hotel in town that provides counter meals.

**Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup>** - today began by motoring back towards the Channel on a windless, cool morning on mirror calm seas. As the day

progressed we were enshrouded with thick fog and drizzle which became rain, accompanied by northerlies. We took a break from the precipitation when we reached North Bruny Island, tucking into an inlet in Snake Bay behind Snake Island, to enjoy some toasted sandwiches and hot coffee to warm up. From there we continued north around the corner back to our secure anchorage of the first night - the Duck Pond. The rain finally cleared in the early evening allowing us to dry our coats!

**Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup>** - another wet morning greeting, just to show us that the 37degree heat we had experienced during our first week in Tassie was not the norm! After spending a quiet morning relaxing and reading we walked, in the cleared conditions to the township of Barnes Bay along the gravel road which ran along the shore and became quite busy after the arrival of the ferry from Kettering on the mainland.. There, we found a picnic table, rubbish bin, boat ramp and a rebuilt jetty covered in barnacles some way away from the ramp. There were no shops or toilets but a very quiet and pretty part of the world. There were some B&B's nearby that looked very inviting.

**Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> March** - Time to retrieve! We enjoyed a good sail back across the Channel with a following breeze into North West Bay and the ramp at Margate. We were to

seas very choppy. We were lucky to have three onboard, and finally with the help of the motor managed to get the boat safely tied on fore and aft. Winching onto the trailer was done in a very controlled way with the help of the boat hook to keep the boat away from the jetty and a tight line tied to the stern that we released slowly as the winch did its work. Safely on solid ground, all that was left was to wash boat and derig during and between showeres. Work finished we showered onboard and put on dry clothes to enjoy a counter tea at the Margate hotel.

**Friday 2<sup>nd</sup>** - saw us traveling up the Midland Highway back to Devonport to catch the overnight "Spirit of Tasmania" home. This crossing was very calm, unlike our trip over, and we all enjoyed a good night's sleep before being woken at 5am ready to dock in Port Melbourne at am.

We had enjoyed a wonderful cruise in mostly great weather in one of the most unspoilt and uncrowded areas we have ever sailed. There are many sheltered anchorages and pleasant walks to be had. The hospitality of Tasmanians is second to none and the experience worth the cost of crossing Bass Strait onboard the "Spirit".

-Anne & Steve Holligan (Silhouette)

appreciate how exposed the ramp was and there were a few tense moments pulling into the jetty as the wind was now quite strong and