

## GREENHILL ISLAND (11° 36'S, 132° 08'E) – Chart AUS 720

**Greenhill Island** is located in the north-western part of Van Diemen Gulf about 30nm SE of Cape Don. This is a destination rarely visited by Darwin yachties; but is sometimes used as a stopover point to shelter from the easterlies en route between Darwin and Port Essington.

### GETTING THERE

**Greenhill Island** is about 100nm on the rhumb line from Cullen Bay Marina. The tidal current at the Vernon Islands begins to run east about 4 hours after low water at Darwin. To utilise the strong currents through the Vernon Islands, a good strategy is to leave Darwin at about low water and it should take 5 to 7 hours to cover the 27 miles to the entrance to the Howard Channel or North Channel. By this time the current will be running in an easterly or north-easterly direction through the Vernons, then in a north-easterly direction towards Abbott Shoal.

The anchorage at Greenhill Island is off the beach on the western side of the island. Tides are the same as Two Hills Bay, 8 miles to the northwest of Greenhill Island.

### HISTORY

**Greenhill Island** is of historical significance as the site of the first attempt at establishing an aboriginal mission on an island in the NT. The plan was to relocate the aboriginal mission from Kaparlgoo (Kapalga) on the South Alligator River, to Greenhill Island. Greenhill Island was a unusual choice as, apart from its isolation, it had little to indicate that it was a place where an agriculturally based mission could survive. The island is only 3.5km long and 1km wide, it is fringed by mangroves, and has a rocky headland on the northern end where the mission was established in October 1902. This site had the advantage of being near a permanent paperbark swamp, where there was hope of some water being found in wells during the dry season.

However, due to the difficulty in getting supplies shipped from Darwin, and the sinking of the mission lugger "*Evangel*" in March 1903, the island location was abandoned in May 1903.

The only signs of the settlement remaining in the 1970's were coconut trees, some steps cut into the rocks, cleared sites with building foundations and depressions in the ground thought to be wells.

### CRUISING TIPS

**A** cruise to Greenhill Island is best tackled during the late dry season, and over a period of neap tides. The anchorage off the western beach is well protected from the southeast around to the northeast, however, the NW swell and northerly seabreezes combined with the tidal current may make the anchorage uncomfortable during the afternoon and early evening.

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