



## Chapter two of the VDL Circumnavigation cruise around Tassie!! – The “Tradition” Continues....Mar 2011

Last time you heard from us was when we arrived in Stanley in the North West of the state and had settled in for a rest before venturing on around the top of Tassie.

Murray, Brian and our Canadian friend Art continue our adventure.



Sunday morning (6 March) does not bring any joy and forecasts are not our way today...we see 30 knots of breeze off Stanley harbour which keeps us here but we do venture into town for a tourist walk and coffee etc.... a roast lamb dinner combined with dessert of “Apricot al la Nut” puts cruising into the right perspective! And a glass of red!

On Monday morning we decide that things are improved so we take off in fairly rough conditions knowing that things will improve once we turn down with a ENE breeze behind us... Only 1.5 knots of speed out of Stanley is not what the doctor ordered but within 2 hours we are tracking along at 7 knots and making good numbers to drop under the Hunter



Group of islands down through the Bird Passage by mid afternoon.

By 1930 we have curried beef and salad for dinner washed down with scotch finger biscuits.....passing Cape Grim and then Sandy Cape by 2245 and midnight off Lagoon Bay!

After midnight, and a new day (Tuesday), we increase speed with a double reef and reduced furler to slow down . . . although still making over 8 knots!

A lull in breeze during the night causes us to do a little motoring before again in we are sailing well down the west coast.



The north easterly is assisting us as we reach “Hell’s Gate” and the entrance to Strahan just around dawn and at 0745 we pass through the entrance getting into the Strahan Harbour around 10am. The log shows 563 Nm complete and an overnight passage of 153 Nm!!

Lastly, a little rest on anchor in Strahan Harbour, relaxing to balance the day.

It is now Wednesday (8 March) and we get ashore for a lovely

breakfast at Banjo’s restaurant across from the yacht on the wharf. Before 1300 we start preparations to sail to Kelly’s Landing and arriving late at 1700, go ashore with the dinghy to two different old landings which provide access to the old mining works and ruins etc of East and West Partridge. Excellent photo opportunities here.





Dinner by Master Chef Murray consists of Greek Souvlaki wraps ... excellent ..., then we hit the sack after working on plans for a Gordon River expedition tomorrow!

By 0730 Thursday we are off sailing toward the entrance to the Gordon River. We get a little too close to one of the piles and sit for a few minutes in mud...temporary setback...and then wind our way up to Warner's Landing to tie up and venture over to the St John's Falls on the opposite bank, viewing the falls and Parks hut with modest accommodation for an overnight stay! No thanks! On returning we visit the Hydro Pipe which gushes fresh water in a nook in the river. Other yachts

raft up to us late afternoon and we enjoy some visiting and conversation of other adventures. Light dinner of chicken wings and salad with a quiet glass soon sees us soundly sleeping!



Well Friday provides an opportunity to take the dinghy and trek up the Gordon and Franklin Rivers for some exploring and photos. Going up a few miles we strike the river fork and enjoy a quick trip into the Franklin stopping at a shallow gravel area and then back and up the Gordon for a few miles taking in the sights and shadows etc. The river flows heavy with tannin colour and is very dark!

We make a decision to take off and get to Hawks Bay for the night. This takes a good four hours and we arrive around 1700 but quick exploration by Art shows

no reasonable landing and we sit down to pre dinner nibbles before having a beautiful Murray Master chef steak dinner with pepper sauce and baked vegies and a glass of Haughton's red.

Saturday (12 March), we arise to a significant sea mist and hear on radio of the disaster in Japan's earthquake!! By 9am we are off to Sarah Island which is a reputed old prison settlement in the harbour and take the



opportunity to walk around after berthing the dinghy at the old wharf. Just as we finish our visit we see a large contingent of visitors arrive on the cruise vessel "Eagle" and hear a number of comments on history by their guide.

We make back to Strahan harbour and arrange a position on the wharf next to "Storm Bay" also from Queenscliff.

Note: The Skipper serves our Canadian some afternoon delights over a cocktail on deck!!

An enjoyable afternoon and a quiet evening with beef curry gives rise to sleep and rest!



We are resident for Sunday in Strahan as we await the new crew coming on with Murray's future son in law Aaron and Kim a close friend, who arrive late afternoon in which time provisioning has been completed ready for our next day's journey. A beautiful dinner at the hotel in Strahan is taken and we settle in for the night.

Monday (14 March), sees us refuel early and sail out of "Hell's Gate" toward Port Davey to arrive early next morning (hopefully!). We set out in fairly lumpy conditions and a



reasonable swell off the coast but we head out to minimise the actions of this before heading down and finally taking a breather by anchoring in behind "Hibb's Pyramid" for a temporary respite.

There are three fishing boats in here and one comes by with a gift of filleted fish for us just as we finish dinner and prepare to head out around 8pm.

The sail around to Port Davey is a little lumpy but eases during the night as the crew watches continue throughout.

By daybreak Tuesday we are approaching the entrance to Bathurst Harbour and by 8.30am are inside and immediately catch two lovely



large couta together with a small gummy shark ...nice!! We progress down and make anchorage in Clayton's Corner.

Lunch obviously is couta and gummy shark courtesy of Kim's fine cooking.

We take off in the dinghy to explore the old Clayton's settlement and trek to the top of the hill that it sits at the bottom of taking in the original and old style settlement that



many have visited and had the hospitality of the Clayton family. Log books show the adventures and people's comments of many past visits. Art continues and progresses to the summit of the peak behind with magnificent views in all directions.



Wednesday (16 March) sees poor weather building up and we know we are in for a few days of sitting around before a break will help us sail out of here and off to Recherche Bay and around the famous Maatsuyker Island.

However, we are not deterred and take off to anchor off Gold Diggers beach having to drop a craypot and try for our own satisfaction. Additionally after lunch we set off in the dinghy up the lower reaches of the Davey River but whilst the scenery is lovely there are almost no bird



life and nothing spectacular to report. A full day's journey is required to see anything of real interest. We return and the weather comes in just as we gather our empty craypot!!! Buzzer! Back to Tradition and we shelter from the weather up stream off King's Point for the next few days. Murray gives us some joy with pre dinner drinks and nibbles before we settle into gourmet pizzas courtesy of Aaron's deft hand. Art takes time to show us a card trick and with a couple of drinks/ coffee we take to our cots.

A miserable wet day settles on us at anchor off King's Point with the only challenge of the day to get Murray to the small dirt airstrip at Melaleuca as he leaves us temporarily to fly out for a friend's wedding in Portarlington. We read, write journals and watch DVD's for the afternoon. We consider our options after radio weather broadcasts by Coast Radio Hobart and look to depart sometime Friday dependant on the direction of swells and wind .... However a roast beef dinner and a bottle of red wine take our attention before we retire in expectation of leaving tomorrow.

Friday (18 March) dawns cloudy with some light rain and we reassess our position and decide to leave around 0930 on fair winds before they turn easterly knowing that there will be swells encountered as we leave the harbour but westerly to north westerly winds will suit us down and around the Cape.



We have to battle the conditions out of the harbour but once we turn south we gain speed and with a reef and staysail set we manage over 6 knots consistently.



Beautiful roast beef and salad sandwiches for a late lunch assists our spirits and we finally arrive off Maatsuyker Island around 1600 the sun shines for photos and then we are doused with some rain and cloud.

Interesting coastline provides much discussion among the crew and by 1800 we are off South East Cape having passed Whale Head earlier and we catch another yacht as we approach the corner and entrance to Recherche Bay for an anchorage for the night.

Around 2130 we are in Recherche and anchor around 2200 along with another 16 odd yachts from the cruise. A late dinner of salt & pepper squid with salad,

is enjoyed by a tired crew who disappear to their bunks soon after.

By 0730 we are up and around and decide to make an early run up to the Huon Valley and Cygnet for the weekend. As we proceed we avoid the kelp that frequents this area and ensure that we are not entangled in craypot lines as well.

Unfortunately the wind vane continues to point exactly where we are headed and we need to motor rather than sail this stretch of the journey!



We arrive at the Port Cygnet Sailing Club and are met on the water by their Commodore who has many moorings arranged for all the cruises as they arrive....fabulous club here with lots of sailing activity. The crew enjoys some hospitality at the club house before a nice dinner onboard Tradition of pork ribs & chicken wings with an obligatory glass. Off to bed!

Sunday (20 March) finds us with Port Cygnet Sailing Club who are hosting a BBQ dinner for the cruise participants before they head off toward Hobart for the final leg of the

cruise. A lovely day watching the locals sail before the social event proves very popular and later in the evening all crews retire to their vessels.

The last day of the cruise for us and we head up the D'Entcasteaux Channel and by early afternoon we arrive at our final destination at Royal Yacht Club of Tasmania in Hobart and tie up to finish our circumnavigation of Tasmania for 2011.



Tradition and crew have completed the 10<sup>th</sup> Van Diemen's Land Circumnavigation having taken 34 days and 945 nautical miles.

The crew thanks Murray MacKay and Tradition, for a great experience and something very unique and special in Australian Yachting/cruising.



*PS. Well the final cruise wrap up dinner at Royal Tasmania Yacht Club in Hobart on Thursday night 23<sup>rd</sup> March is a great affair with speeches and presentations on all aspects of the journey....*

*Tradition scoops the award with the "Admiral Sir Guy Wyatt - Most Authentic Logbook" for the cruise scoring a lovely plaque ...well done crew!*

