

Fremantle to Darwin 2010

Affinity 473 – Beneteau Oceanis 473

Fremantle to Darwin

Skipper – Mark Loader

Owner – Leo Killigrew

Crew – Neil Jones

Broome to Darwin

Crew – Peter & Chay Robinson

Crew – Ida Killigrew

Departure from FSC – 06:45am Saturday 17th April 2010

Julie & Dylan & I arrived in Fremantle on Monday the 12th April and stayed at Leo and Ida's, Julie has to do some training on Thursday and Friday so I will move to the boat Thursday night and get ready for departure on Saturday.

Saturday 17th April

Strong easterly then lightish south east/southerly, made around 5 knots heading for waypoint off Jurien Bay, passed Juring in about 19 hours

Sunday 18th April

Water maker minor probs with filters, southerly/south west winds.

Monday 19th April

Light south westerley, a lot of motoring today.

4' Bronze Whaler took 1.5 hours to land, then let it go as it was too big, cut the line after Leo took some video.

Around 100 miles to Steep point

At 17:00 we hooked a Mahi Mahi and got it to the boat before one of the jags on the lure snagged the transom rubber and the fish wriggled free, bugger, it was a nice looking fish, still bright green and gold so not totally worn out but probably around 10kg, better luck next time.

Tuesday 20th April

Overnight at Shelter Bay near Steep Point, BBQ sausages, baked beans & mushrooms with a couple of red wines and a rum & coke. Lots of campers on the shore and a gumby in a steel masthead yacht called Free Sprit that sailed past us inshore and parked it on the sand and had to be towed off by four of the campers fishing boats.

Wednesday 21st April

Departed at 06:30 from Shelter Bay, we are now around 48nm North, 70nm to Cape Cuvier and

around 220 to Exmouth, we should get there Friday afternoon. Wind is southerly at 18 knots we had a poled out headsail and heading around 020 at 6-7 knots, put the headsail away and jibed, still doing around 5-6 knots at around 000 right on course for a waypoint off Cuvier.

Thursday 22nd April

Light winds behind, some sailing but mainly motor sailing, plenty of Tuna, we caught a few and released them

Friday 23rd April

Arrived in Exmouth at around 3pm, pulled into a pen that belonged to Fisheries, harbour master moved us to the end of the T in front of a Perry 43 and another rafted catamaran
Julie & Dylan arrived at 7pm, we had a few drinks and hit the sack

Saturday 24th April

In Exmouth, went sight seeing down to Yardie Creek, Tantabiddi, lighthouse etc.

Sunday 25th April Anzac Day

Julie found out that she had given the wrong key to Marcel so the cat couldn't be fed, she plans to leave after lunch. Went to town and got some provisions and then back to the boat. Julie and I left at about 1pm, it was hot and muggy, Julie suggested we should depart too so we did and headed for Serrurier Island. We arrived at about 7pm, anchored off the south eastern bay. Neil, did pizza's on the BBQ for dinner with baked apples and cream for sweets.

Monday 26th April

We will stay at Serrurier tonight and do a bit of fishing, then head for Onslow at first light. Change of plan we have decided to head for Onslow today. We arrived at

Tuesday 27th April

In Onslow

Wednesday 28th April

We took 222 litres of fuel and had done 70 hours of motoring, 2.6 litres per hour. We didn't fill the water as the water maker makes great water and we will run it again when we get into clear water. Wind was from the North West at around 10 knots, beautiful sailing with full headsail and $\frac{3}{4}$ main, as the wind eased we went to a full mainsail, finally motoring without sail for the last couple of miles.

We arrived at an anchorage west of Sholl Island at around 2am and anchored in 7.5 metres of water.

Thursday 29th April

We slept in a bit and were up and around just before 8am. The plan is to launch the dinghy and see if we can move Affinity closer to the island and then explore with the dinghy and walk the reef tonight looking for crayfish and oysters. No joy with the crayfish but plenty of oysters

Friday 30th April

Anchored near moorings between east and west Lewis Islands in the Dampier Archipelago

Saturday 1st May

Pulled anchor at 10am after clearing a blocked skin fitting that caused the front head to fill the waste tank and then discharge from the top overflow skin fitting above the water.

We arrived at Dampier at around 11:30 am and took up a mooring that we would the next day have

to move from and steal another.

Sunday 2nd May to Wednesday 5th May

In Dampier

Wednesday 5th May

Departed when Margaret arrived at 15:45, heading for the Montebello Islands, a strong 25 knot westerly has been blowing all day and is just showing signs of weakening

Thursday 6th May

04:00 we are 8nm from the northern passage, dawdling along under mainsail waiting for first light to decide where we will park, we motored for 6 hours when the wind died at 9pm last night and when we realized we would be a bit early and as the wind was up to 10kn of Easterly we decided to do some sailing to get us there at sunrise at 0635.

We arrived and parked off Main Bay on Trimouille Island

Friday 7th May

Monte Bellos, fishing, exploring

Saturday 8th May

We departed at 16:00 through the south east passage and headed for Mermaid Strait

Sunday 9th May

We dawdled along under some sail and lots of motor through last night, it was lumpy and both Margaret and Leo were feeling sea sick. First light we were passing Mistaken Island and were back on a mooring a short time later.

Monday 10th May

In Dampier doing some washing and a little bit of shopping

Tuesday 11th May

Departed at 09:40 heading outside Legendre Island and hoping to anchor off Pt Sampson just before dark. We forgot about the 17:45 sunset and whilst heading for an anchorage on the west side of Bezout Island, changed our plans and headed for Depuch instead, a beef and cheese pie for dinner and a 2.5 hour watch each got us to Depuch.

Wednesday 12th May

We arrived off Depuch Island at around 1am and anchored until first light, then we upped anchor and headed into the mouth of Balla Balla Creek and anchored just off the North side of Depuch Island.

Thursday 13th May

After doing some exploring yesterday and talking to some museum people on the shore we revisited and went to wreck point and up a nearby creek and took a heap of photos of aboriginal rock carvings, I wouldn't call it art, a little like the first attempts by a four year old to draw a turtle or lizard. Beautiful in the eye of the beholder and the parents but nothing to hang on the museum wall. Still they were really old and interesting, particularly the locations near where water would gather if there was rain and hell why not sit around and carve on rocks, it's a lot easier than building a house or planting crops or even inventing the wheel, none of which of course these people had time to do. We departed late morning and headed for Broome

Friday 14th – Sunday the 16th May

Slogging into a 20-25 knot NE wind, not very comfortable, we initially motored then when the motor couldn't manage put out a bit of mainsail and nearer Broome on the Sunday morning a bit of headsail and were doing 4-5 knots in the right direction. We arrived in Broome about 11:30, had bacon, sausages and eggs for late breakfast and a couple of Strongbow ciders to wash it down afterwards

Monday 17th – Thursday 20th May

In Broome, oil change and a bit of minor maintenance and preparation for arrival of three more pax on Wednesday afternoon.

Tuesday 18th May

Wednesday 19th May

Peter, Chay and Ida arrived PM

Thursday 20th May

Friday 21st May

Saturday 22nd May

Departed Broome heading for Yampi Sound via Thomas Bay

Sunday 23rd May

Thomas Bay, me on boat, rest visiting Lombadina for 2 hours

Monday 24th May

Departed Thomas Bay

Tuesday 25th May

Coppermine Creek

Wednesday 26th May

Coppermine Creek, lost the prop on the dinghy, had to row back with a bit of wind and tide from Coppermine creek to the boat moored on the big cyclone mooring, changed to the 15hp Johnson but had to connect the fuel line directly to the engine inlet as the connectors on the fuel line were wrong. We assumed that the mix is 50 to 1 and mixed accordingly. The dinghy now planes with 2-3 aboard and exploring creeks is a lot quicker. Coppermine to Crocadile

Thursday 27th May

Coppermine to Dogleg for fuel and then to Silvergull, I said hello to Phil and Marion and went back to the boat.

Friday 28th May

Departed Silvergull

Anchored in south end of Dugong Bay near falls at southern end

Saturday 29th May

Talbot Bay

Caught a couple of queenfish but not a lot around the rain and spring tides have the fish either full or just not biting.

Sunday 30th May

Talbot Bay, Horizontal Falls

Monday 31st May 2010

Departed Talbot Bay heading for Raft Point via stopover at Mangrove Bay, Melomys Island

Tuesday 1st June 2010

0600 departed heading for Raft Point, big dark rain clouds coming from the north, we are closed up awaiting the downpour and motoring towards the NE

Wednesday 2nd June 2010

Ruby Falls, Red Cone Creek, worth a visit

Thursday 3rd June 2010

Departed Red Cone Creek, visited Langgi, then to Deception Bay North End

Friday 4th June 2010

Departed Deception Bay and arrived at Sheep Island Camden Harbour

Saturday 5th June 2010

Departed Sheep Island heading for St George Basin, will stop on the way overnight and head for the mouth of the Prince Regent early Sunday morning. We anchored in Hanover Bay just in front of the sandy beach in about 9 metres of water. We watched a movie State of Play with Russell Crowe not bad combined with a couple of bottles of red after consuming some Mackerel cutlets off the barbie.

Sunday 6th June 2010

We departed at first light with a plan to head for the Prince Regent but after some discussion of tides, we are at neaps with 3 metre lows and 6 metre highs, it was decided that we would give the basin and Prince Regent a miss and head for Careening Bay.

Arrived at Careening Bay at 10:33 anchored about 800 metres further in than we did with Shore Thing.

We had a 13:30 BBQ lunch on the beach with snags, steak and fish and a bit of the remaining salad. We fished during the afternoon from the rocks and in the dinghy but both still bottom fishing with bait and trolling and casting proved fruitless.

Monday 7th June 2010 – Foundation Day Public Holiday

At first light, well a bit later really we motored out of Careening Bay and headed for Ivy Cove between the two innermost of the Coronation Island, about 5 miles away. We had a brewed coffee before heading to the beach to explore and look at the Boab with Ivy 1890 engraved on it. We hadn't been long on the beach when a 2 and a bit metre crock that was imitating a stick popped up between the shore and Affinity, it hung around for a while but disappeared when we did a dinghy run from the shore to Affinity. As the easterly started to drop back from its peak of around 25 knots we motored north then after rounding Hardy Point and Cape Torrens we headed east south east towards the Hunter River. We anchored just after dark on the west side of Naturalists Island off Naturaliste Bay and had chilli con carne and crumbed Threadfin for dinner.

Tuesday 8th June 2010

At around 06:30 we moved north to the top of Skippy Bay to avoid the easterlies, we will head for the Hunter Mouth later when the easterly abates.

Wednesday 9th June 2010

Hunter River, crocks again watching us, one small one and a larger one that we teased for a while

and fed cans, wine bottles and a baking dish to.

Thursday 10th June 2010

Shelter Bay, Prudhoe Island after viewing the art at Wary Bay Bigge Island, a 3 metre crock was sighted by K20 as they ferried guests to the shore, we didnt see it.

Friday 11th June

Departed Shelter Bay bound for Wallaston Island at 13:40

Arrived in the pearl lease bay at the top east of Swift Bay just on sunset.

Saturday 12th June

Caught a GT and a few small snapper and coral trout that we let go, explored the small inlet in the middle east and found some quartz crystals and oyster shells, the result of an aboriginal meal, also some charcoal coloured hand prints under a ledge.

Sunday 13th June

Explored in the morning and headed out at 12:30 for the bottom of Swift Bay to visit the aboriginal art and some more exploring

Ken Waller, CJ and guests arrived on Major Tom from Palm Island, Ken bought with him a bottle of bundy and we purchased three cartons of beer from him as our supplies were running low. I gathered and shucked about three dozen oysters and we rafted next to Major Tom and gave them to then, one of the crew had them natural, the others CJ turned to Kilpatrick and all commented on how good they were.

Monday 14th June

In the morning we visited some Bradsahw art that Ken took us to in the south east corner of Swift bay up a creek and near a cave, where an 18 and 12 foot crock are shackled up, then Major Tom headed towards Krait Bay and we decided to head for Palm Island as Ken said that it was so good.

Tuesday 15th June

We anchored last night near an island next to Palm Island, this morning leo and I climbed to the cave at the top where a fresh water supply was coming out of the rocks, the view was terrific, at 11:15 we headed down to the south cornere where a creek takes us to some more Baradshaws, apparently the oldest drawing of a canoe in the world.

Arrived at Murrangingi Island overnight

Wednesday 16th June

Departed Murrangingi at first light and headed for Parry Harbour, anchored overnight

Thursday 17th June

Departed Parry Harbour, fires around us last night, no fish, heading for Frehwater Bay.

Friday 18th June

Freshwater Bay, a bit of fishing but not much happening, visited the creek that was flowing, not like 2002 when it was bone dry, also went to the moth of the spring on the eastern side of the little bay.

Saturday 19th June

Motored approx 10nm south to Jar Island Bradshaw drawings this morning, now anchored off the DC3 that crashed in WW2, Leo, Ida, Chay and Peter are ashore and I am looking after Affinity

Sunday 20th June

We headed out towards Middle Rock and arrived at slack tide, we followed the exact waypoints and

track in the third edition of the Fremantle Sailing Clubs book and ran into mud to the NW of what the chart showed as middle rock, we launched the dinghy and found the real channel to the SE of the imaginary rock shown on the chart. We motored on with the plan to head for Cape Talbot but the wind against tide made it very uncomfortable and we turned back around the eastern end of Sir Graham Moore Island and anchored just off the shore at Cape Anjo.

Monday 21st June

Nearly caught what looked like a Black Marlin in 1.5 metres of water with a purple popper, did catch a Golden Trevally. We departed in afternoon and headed for East Governor Island and anchored overnight between East and West Governor Island

Tuesday 22nd June

Departed at 06:00 and arrived at Cape Talbot at 08:45

Wednesday 23rd June

Cape Talbot to Jims Bay

Then in the evening Jims Bay to Monitor Bay

Thursday 24th June

Monitor Bay, fishing, and visiting the falls, magnificent at the end of a 3km creek

PM moved to Koolama Bay for a high tide entry to the King George River, Ken Waller gave us his lats & longs and we got in without drama.

Friday 25th June

Crew visited the top, I fuelled the dinghy and tidied up the boat a bit.

Overnight halfway to the mouth, Leo & I visited the falls and a friendly croc slithered off a rock and headed our way so we got out of there without doing the rock climb, bay is only .7 metres deep so slow entry and exit.

Saturday

Departed at first light, rounded Cape Rulheires and towards Darwin, now 14:15 Darwin time, have been sailing for 6 hours no probs in the right direction, forecast is for light winds