

Darwin to Fremantle August – September 2006
Yandanooka

Crew

Ralph Newton – Rich Owner

Rob Hills – Crew, Official Yacht Doctor & Web Designer

Rod Ryan- Passenger

Mark Loader – Navigator & Kimberley Guide

Beneteau Oceanis 411 3 Cabin USA Version

50 HP 4 cylinder Yanmar

150 litres fuel, 700 ish litres water

We departed from the pen at Cullen Bay Marina 31st August 2006 at 19.40, we were out through the lock by 8pm and motor sailed for the night, we put the main up at about 10pm and at sunrise the wind started to swing around from south to east, we unfurled the headsail and were doing 6 to 7 knots. Out went the first line and within 15 minutes we hooked something big, the line was unstoppable and finally snapped, bugger. Second line caught a little mackerel that was quickly turned to fillets and will make a nice lunch. It is 11:05 NT time, we have done around 75 miles in the first 15 hours, a 5 knot average, not too bad to get us started. It is now 12:36 NT Time, we are motoring, the wind has died out almost completely, we are at 12 46 S, 129 29 E, about 145 miles from Koolama Bay & King George River, if we get the timing right we are going to go up to the waterfall (that probably has dried up) and spend the night, low tide is at 18:00 tomorrow so we wxill need to get there earlier in the afternoon or have to go in at midnight or midday the next day. We need some wind if we are going to make it by lunchtime tomorrow.

It is now 01:20 on the 2nd September, we have been motoring since midday yesterday, wind is about 8 knots slightly off the port bow, seas are calm, not much happening really. We hop to get into some serious fishing today, we will see what happens when the sun comes up in 4 hours time.

We have a tuna, not huge but half a meal, we had a delightful sail into Koolama Bay, we almost had a very nice mackerel as we cam into the 2002 Splash anchorage, bummer it go loose just as we were about to lift it onboard. It is now 4 hours later, the sun has just set and we are parked firmly in 3 feet of water waiting for the tide to turn and get deep enough for us to get off the entrance sandbank and up into the river, 3 hours to go and we may be on our way. The tide came up far enough for us to move at around 9pm, we motored slowly inside and put down anchor just next to another yacht on the starboard side of the entrance, in the opening of small creek. Next morning at first light we motored up in the direction of the falls but parked again around a mile up, we had swung towards the port side of the channel, I had thought that the way to the falls was on the left hand fork oops, wrong way. We were lucky enough to only be there for ½ hour, attempting to kedge our way out, when the charter cat K20 came along and offered their assistance. After recovering our anchor in the dinghy and getting very muddy Peter and his crew on K20 had us off the mud and on our way again. Ralph had contemplated going back to the mouth and leaving on the high tide at 04:00 but changed his mind at the suggestion of following K20 to the falls and then again following them out through the entrance bank at

05:00 in the morning. We put Yandanooka's bow under the fall in the amphitheatre and we all had a fresh water shower, we washed off the deck and did some clothes washing as well. At 13:00 we followed K20 back up to the mouth and anchored 1 mile in, to await K20's departure at 5am. It is now 8:13, we are about 14 miles from rounding Cape Londonderry. We hooked up two big mackerel on the way out, one took the lure and a heap of line and scarpered, Ralphs prize \$20 lure gone, the other one we got to the boat but the line snapped as we were lifting him onto the boat, shit bum poo. We have the lines out again, we have constructed a noose with one of the fishing rods and Ralph has sharpened the hook on the non adjustable boat hook that should serve as a gaff, lets hope for some more fish for lunch. We have about 160 litres of diesel left, not enough to motor all the way to Broome, so we have to be conservative from here on, sailing whenever we can and only motoring at 1500 or so revs to keep the usage to under 2 litres per hour, this should give us 320 miles of motoring, it is about 450 to Broome with detours

A few things have happened since the last log entry, we have caught two small sharks that we send back, one Tuna that would have been a nice fish had it not been bitten in half by a shark just before it reached the back of the yacht. Blood poured out of the poor fish but it still made a nice feed for the four of us. We stopped yesterday at Bigge Island for just long enough for a 1 hour beach visit, we didn't see any of the Bradshaw paintings, we tried to get a location to reduce the search area from a yacht that responded to a call on VHF16 but his only info was on the north west of Boomerang Bay, we were in Boomerang Bay and there were a heap of spots that could be possible. We walked around the beach and up a tidal and fairly dry mangrove creek before heading back to the dinghy just as the sun set and back to Yandanooka to get back on our way. We were originally intending to stop possibly at one of the creeks near Koolan & Cockatoo, Silver Gull or Crocodile Creek but we are running out of time for a Rod & Rob so we have arranged a fuel pick up at Lombadina with Robert Sipisado who helped us with the Splash last year, we will then probably drop Rod at Broome and then head for Dampier for some more fuel and a re-provision before heading back to sea to get her to Freo before the southerly winds get too strong .

We passed Cape Leveque this morning just after dawn and motored down to Lombadina. Robert met us on the beach after we called him on his mobile various times without talking to anyone but the recorded message. Rod took his bags as we had arranged a lift for him to Broome with a Horizon Power vehicle. Rod spat the dummy a couple of days ago, we had been joking around since the day we left Darwin but all of a sudden he change his tune, claimed I had called him a fat C\$%^& and then took his fishing rod below so that no one else could use it. I finally have a proper bed after sleeping on the setee that is neither comfortable, private or wide enough to sleep on. Rod who did little other than sleep and read books, no cooking , had the port cabin and closed the door at night so that the noise of running the watches didn't keep him awake. He didn't have the consideration to be quiet when in the saloon area so my sleep was not only uncomfortable but bloody noisy particularly at watch changes. I am pretty sure that his sudden change of humour and subsequent eruption was caused by his lack of comfort at being at sea, and an excuse to get off and not finish the part of the delivery that he said that he would do, it was just after discussing the distance that we would be offshore on the way to Dampier

that his change occurred, he had often commented on his fear of almost everything, sharks, crocodiles, even walking ashore at Bigge Island made him comment about how afraid he was, I guess we assume that a 6 foot something 120kg man wouldn't be so afraid of things that we are quite used to.

We stopped only long enough for a look around, a chat to Robert, 5 x 20 litres jerries of diesel at \$1.80 per litre (cheaper than Nanutarra Roadhouse) and we were on our way. We caught a tuna, dog mackerel and a Coral Cod (would you believe on a deep diving trolled lure) all on the same lure. We gave the cod to Robert, I also gave him US\$20 and Ralph gave him AU\$20 as well. Robert Sipisardo had picked us up at the beach and run us up and back to the community. Lombadina looked typically green and beautiful, the only noticeable difference from my last visit was the building that was next to the church, the convent, was a pile of burnt tin and rubble, apparently some teenagers had burnt it down three weeks ago, the other difference the number of graves that had been added, last year (2006), quite a few older locals had passed away, the back of the original cemetery that holds the graves of the original Spanish Friars that passed away early last century has been temporarily widened with some boulders marking the new limits, the new graves standing out against the older ones with bright flowers and un aged headstones and crosses.

We caught another big yellowfin tuna on the way out of Lombadina, he was a real fighter and broke the line as we were attempting to set him free, we have enough fish for now so fishing will be for the fun of it for the next day or two.

We are now approximately 330 miles from Dampier, around 500 from Exmouth, we will be running fairly short of provisions by the time we get to Exmouth, I think that there are 3 litres of milk left, a bit of cereal, some steaks, mince and a few onions, then it is onto the lovely tinned food. I am pickling some tuna and we have enough flour for another loaf of bread, maybe 2 if we make up a bit. smaller and add some extra ingredients to bulk them up a bit. Rob made an interesting dish yesterday, Cus Cus with Tapenade (Olive Paste) & cream sauce in the side with some baked mackerel, it was very nice. We will have to get creative with some of the remaining fish and see what we can come up with.

We are now 22 miles from Legendre Island, about 40 from Dampier, in the last 24 hours the wind picked up to nearly 40 knots, we found a few leaks, both notebooks has a salt water wash, Rods deciding that it was time to die, Ralphs being resuscitated after laying on its keyboard for the night and then having a short sun bake this morning. The wind was strong from the south and moved east and eased as the night moved on, it is now 12:19 and there is about an 9 knot breeze from the east, we have just the headsail up and the engine at 1900 revs, the main was just banging about and blocking the wind from the headsail. A little sea bird joined us at some stage last night and is currently sitting in the cockpit enjoying the shade and wobbling about as the boat rocks over the still lumpy seas.