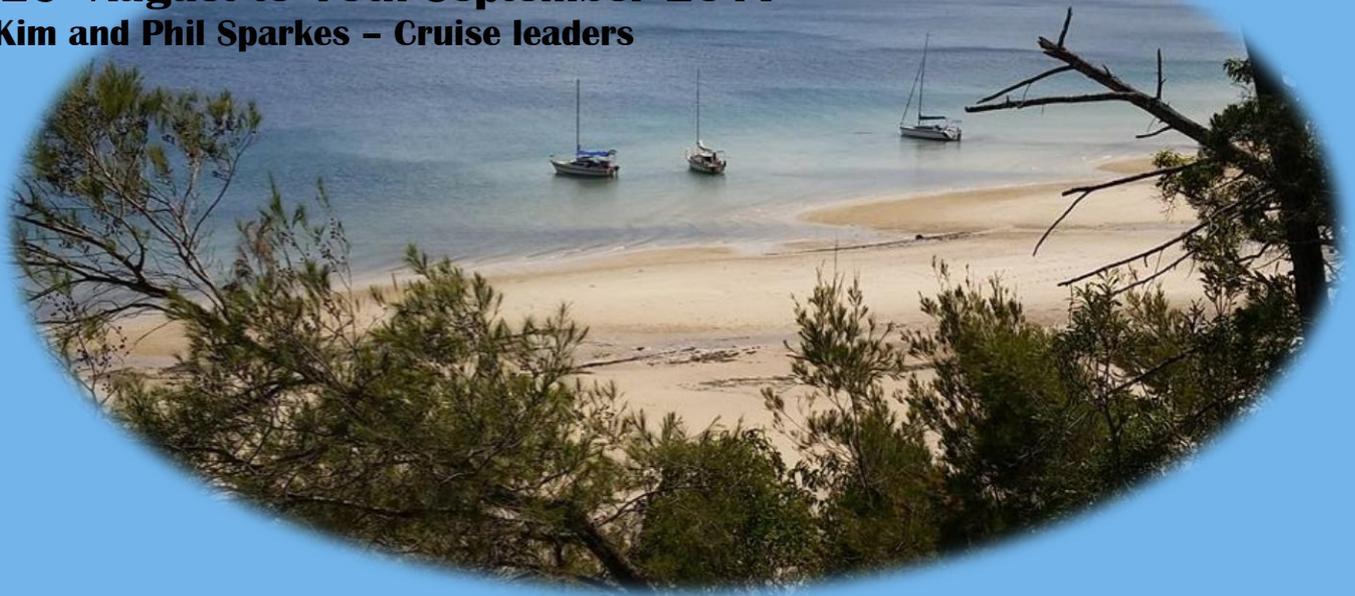


Frazer Island Cruise

26th August to 10th September 2017

Kim and Phil Sparkes – Cruise leaders



Written by several club members.

By Graeme and Charmain – “Crosswind”

*Six little boats sailing in a row,
Excitement in their hearts
adventuring they go.
The Enchantress, a Free Spirit,
Hums A Song that it's About
Time we Sail Way,
With a bit of Crosswind, up the
Fraser Coast and around
Hervey Bay,
To spot lots of whales and
watch them at play.*



*First night Coongul Creek
then Wathumba too, helping
each other bonds us like
glue.
Meanwhile, like gods of the
entrance, Phil and Kevin
guiding us in.....did they
think they were in heaven?*



*There's smoke on the water
and fire in the sky,
Watching the big red sun
come up....then die.*

*Adventures we are
setting with our tiller, to
enjoy the experience of
sailing in a flotilla.*

*More whale adventures,
beautiful white sandy
shores, Down to Moon
Point and around to*

*Kingfisher for the night. Hot shower, hair wash, shared meal, anchored or
dried out, roly poly...sleep tight!*



*Through those Great Sandy Straits they
head, Enjoying Polly Point and historic
Camp Zed.*

*From beacon to beacon, navigating the
channels, constantly watching, For our
safety our leader we can thank. We are
luckier than some, not having much fun,
caught on the bank.*

*Cosy Garry's Anchorage we five are now
here. Hard to imagine over 100 more will
fit at a different time of year.*

*It's Friday already and anchors are up. Further
south we head to Tin Can for restock, sit and sup.*

*Enjoying the marina life, dolphins are about,
Dugong spotting, as we are on our way out.*

*What a great sail, retracing our wake, heading
back north is the trail we take.*

*South White Cliffs is where we stay, Through the
night until the break of day.*



*Though who is that so far away? Off on their own
– did they want to play? John, you lucky person -
Happy Father's Day!*

*Weather has been kind, though winds are
increasing, Protection is what we are all seeking.*

*Urangan Marina suits most for a comfort bed.
And some choose to experience the River Head.*

*For them, a bracing sail back the next day,
through narrow channels, passing southwest of
Big Woody Island seems the best. Over the
shallows, back with the rest, sharing tales of the
avocado harvest.*

*Others had fun Poppins into Maryborough city by
car, from Urangan marina, it really wasn't that
far. Yet another has joined the fleet. Norma Jean
we are happy to greet.*



*Tuesday the 5th sees us rested, stocked, and fit more of the big open waters of
Hervey Bay. Surfing back into Coongul, as our base for a few days, again to
watch the giant's gentle play.*

*To walk, paddle, swim, chat or even to trap crabs, Relax and play games at the
campfire, dinner is up for grabs.*

*One by one it's back to the marina, retrieve and derig. After debriefing, it's
sadly the end of this gig.*

*Thanks to our fearless leaders for showing us not only the straits and the bay,
But the joy of the life holidaying this way.*

*They are our guides, teachers, rocks, and boulders, Lots
of responsibilities upon their shoulders.*

And.....

Just from Kev and Gay - 'Only time'

*It's About Time we sailed this way.
Excited to see the whales that have come to play.
They look so big next to Sailaway.*

*With everyone having so much fun.
Exploring the deserted beach on the run.*



*Collecting shells was Gaylene 's interest,
Whilst trying to find the most prettiest.*

*We think how lucky we are to sit around the fire and embers
With a great group of NHYTA members.*

***From John & Lisa
Pateman “Humm-
Along’***

*We would like to
add to
Crosswind’s
report on the
cruise not as a
daily recount
of what
happened, but to
share our personal
hi-lights and
experiences during this
amazing trip.*



This was our first real “big” trip on our boat and in preparation for it, we had some adjustments and additions to make on our boat. For example, a new solar panel and meters were added with Warren’s help, which John appreciated!



With thorough checks completed on the trailer and methodical planning to ensure we had everything we needed for the two weeks away, we felt we were ready. This was going to be a new experience for us.

It had been a last-minute decision to go due to commitments to our home renovations this year, we initially thought we would not have the time. Thankfully (in hindsight) we had some big delays in our renovations!

We had an uneventful road trip up to Hervey Bay and it was lovely to meet up with our fellow cruisers, some of whom we knew and others we met in person for the first time. We had a great group of people who were all there for the same thing, to support one another and enjoy each other’s company in such a beautiful area of the country.

The weather was beautiful, it was so lovely to get away from winter and sickness back at home! Despite having a couple days of wind which caused some choppy conditions on the water (and the entrance to a particular creek!) and the terrible smoke haze on the west coast of Frazer Island, (due to their annual burn off), we had no rain, and the weather was balmy.



After departing Urangan Marina on Monday morning, our first “real” night was spent on Coongal Creek. By far, I feel, it was the most favoured spot for all of us! We were amazed by the extreme tides there, the only time you could get in to the creek without grounding was 2 hours either side of high tide.

But this resulted in an amazing, secluded camping spot for our group, on the banks of a sandy spit positioned between the white sandy beach and clear waters of the creek. As the tide went out completely, the boats were left high and dry on the sand.

It was perfect! We enjoyed happy hours around the campfire on the spit, watching the amazing glow of hazy sunsets and the evenings when the moon came up full and bright. (Of course, we returned to Coongul Creek during the second week after exploring the length of the Frazer coast).



On the first day out sailing we all enjoyed the magic of the whales. Despite the smoky conditions which reduced visibility, some of the whales were quite playful and some were fortunate to witness them breaching and tail flapping!

However, for John and me, our most memorable experience with the whales happened in the second week when we had a few days camped in Coongul Creek. We decided to head out early one morning before the chartered boats arrived in the area.

We motored a good hour and a half and were beginning to think we would need to turn around to return to the creek before low tide. Then in the distance we recognised a familiar spurt of water and headed in that direction.

As we approached, we cut the motor and hoisted the sails, however the whales were heading in the wrong direction for us. So, we decided to pull the sails down and just wait for the whales to reappear. And they did! Right bedside our boat. A mother and her calf who were suddenly inquisitive to investigate who or what we were!



It was the most exhilarating and slightly terrifying moment of my life as the enormous, majestic creatures approached our boat, encircling it on purpose to literally check us out!



It was the most amazing experience; one I will never forget! They were within metres of our boat singing and talking to one another as the baby frolicked with its mother! I felt like a cork bobbing in the ocean, very aware of how small we were. But they were just happy playing with one another entertaining us for about twenty minutes so close we could see their eyes and barnacles on their body. At one point we had a third visitor approach us from the side taking a last-minute dive under our boat which was a little thrilling to say the least!

After some time, they were quite satisfied with us and decided to head on their way! At this point we observed some charter boats on the approach so decided to call it a day for whale encounters and made our way back to the others in Coongul Creek for a day of R and R!!

This twenty-minute experience had been such a special hi-light of this trip because we had never experienced anything like this before with whales. And so close!

Another hi-light John and I especially enjoyed was dolphin feeding in Tin Can Bay. This is an experience I highly recommend to anyone travelling in the area and you don't need to go all the way to Monkey Mia in W.A. (and we have recently!)

We had a lovely one-night stop in the marina at Tin Can Bay, where we were able to re-stock, re-fuel and wash clothes and self! The amenities were lovely, and we enjoyed the best seafood there, recommended by a local. We also took the opportunity to enjoy a meal together and dined out in a lovely restaurant at the marina.

A late departure was planned for the next day, so as we had heard about the wonderful dolphin feeding early in the morning by the boat ramp, we decided to head down. It was



Saturday morning and at 7.30am there were plenty of people at the spot waiting for the feeding time. Even though the dolphin feeding brought in a sizeable crowd, the experience was on a much smaller scale than Monkey Mia (in WA) and we all had the opportunity to feed the dolphins.

So, this made it a very special experience for us. We were also impressed with how organised the experience was and the care the dolphins received from the volunteers and those who ran the organisation.

At the beginning of the cruise, we both weren't sure what to expect or how we would go. But I must say this experience exceeded all expectations. The weather was mostly perfect, conditions on the water generally good or we could avoid the choppy conditions and nothing major went wrong.



The downside was the smokey conditions primarily on the north of the island, where the burn-offs were huge. This was mainly the first couple of days in the cruise where it affected visibility for all of us and our sinuses!! After that, we headed south out of it. But it created some awesome sunsets!!

We visited some beautiful areas along the Frazer coast (Kingfisher Resort, Garry's Anchorage, South Whitecliffs) where we dropped anchor and tied off.

Despite a slight mishap when someone (who will remain nameless!) dragged anchor in the night waking in the morning to be nowhere near the rest of the fleet, we enjoyed the most wonderful "Happy Hours" together and toasted glorious sunsets.



The rest and relaxation on Coongul Creek was so lovely, where we could swim, paddle board, talk, throw out crab traps, take long beach walks for shells or just find a comfy spot to read the hours away being totally un-sociable!

Just an incredible trip!! We, on behalf of everyone too, would like to thank Kim and Phil for offering the invitation to club members to join them on the cruise. They were so prepared and organised we all felt well supported and have gained so much by the experience.

Thank you to our fellow cruisers too for also helping to make this such a memorable experience. We enjoyed your company, your laughs and sharing it all with you!

