

NEWSLETTER

China Girl to Hobart

By David Bradburn

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After a 2 year cruising hiatus it was exciting and a bit scary getting everything ready and heading out to sea again finally. After sailing locally and having fitted 2x wind generators on the boat I was a bit anxious not having tested equipment in real sea conditions.

We left on the 2nd January 2022 with myself, Cecile, my son, Will and his mate Joel. Cecile did a wonderful job of preparing pre-cooked dinners and provisioning for the trip. Will and Joel bought drinks and snacks for themselves. I was just excited to get out there again.



We sailed to Hobart in 4 legs:
 Lake Macquarie to Jervis Bay 18 hrs 1 night
 Jervis Bay to Eden 22 hrs 1 night
 Eden to Schouten Passage 56 hrs 2 nights
 Oyster Bay to Darlington 6 hrs
 Darlington to Hobart 9 hrs
 111 hrs total
 4.5 days
 4 nights at sea

The first leg was an exciting first night to sea which we were a bit overpowered for, and pulled into Botany Bay to put 2 reefs in the main which was more comfortable to do than turning into a 25 knot northeaster.



Sea sickness was kept to a minimum with patches from New Zealand, and for the crew. It was a fast trip to Jervis Bay and Will hand steered for 4 hours in the night due to autopilot not being able to keep up. Great having him onboard to do a shift in difficult conditions. First failure, the large alternator stopped working coming into Jervis Bay only putting in 10 amps! Lucky China Girl has a 2nd alternator to keep everything going as well solar panels! Wind generators not working either ...great! Do we turn around or continue?

After fitting the spare alternator this also failed so relying now on a 60 amp alternator and 720w solar. Turn off 2 fridges and just use freezer. Having to run the engine more to keep topped up and hand steering also helped. Jervis Bay is beautiful having picked up a public mooring just outside Huskinson. We had a chance to explore the river, beaches and village. Now we're cruising! We were greeted by a few friendly local dolphins on entry to the river. Nice to have R and R after our first leg.



Next leg Jervis Bay to Eden. Another good leg and dropped anchor outside the public wharf. Had chance to explore on the paddle board but first get the best fish and chips on the East Coast. No co-op anymore. Can't believe it! How disappointing and what's more being abused for using a charter boat floating pontoon. Welcome to Eden!!

We stayed here for 3 days and purchased a generator to supplement solar as no sun. Visited town for pizza, whale museum and further exploring. The weather cleared and given the go ahead for Bass Strait crossing the next day.!



Had chance to explore southern side of Twofold Bay. Nice evening stopover and ready for early start. We sailed due South from Eden then turned to Schouten Passage being far off the coast thus avoiding a southerly change. Great to spend 2 nights at sea getting back into the swing of passage making! Just when you leave the cockpit Cecile was beside herself having caught her first fish, a BIG EYE TUNA!

Batteries were kept topped up and the auto pilot was going well having topped up with oil. It was great to spot land, and had a wonderful sail to Schouten Passage then anchored at Promise Bay for the night. Next morning a walk to Wineglass Bay for a swim!

From here we motored past Isle Des Phoques Island (White Rock) where we observed hundreds of seals sunbaking and frolicking... very exciting and fun to watch. Anchored in Darlington Bay on dusk to find a large seal swimming past our boat. More BBQ, and 2nd serving of tuna. It was a big fish! Had a chance to explore Darlington. What a fascinating place! Wildlife galore, seals, wombats, wallabies, Cape Baren Geese. Maria Island, a National Park Heritage listed township. Having been a prison in the mid 1800's. Beautiful crystal waters next stop Chinaman's Bay for the night with a swim to beach and a walk. The boys were more confident now and Will swam from the beach back to the boat as well. Wallabies on the beach and our final serving of tuna. Cecile did an amazing job trying to add as much interest to our food.



Next morning we left at 5 am having to time the Dunalley Passage at high tide 7:30 am. From here we booked an 8:00 am bridge and a quick motor/sail to Hobart town. Hobart City is so welcoming by letting us stay a night at Constitution Dock where we savoured walking and riding scooters till all hours of the night. What great fun!

Salamanca markets in the morning and catching up with friends. A really memorable trip and fantastic time sailing and exploring. Next trip is the first leg of the circumnavigation of Tasmania. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed this unique experience. Seasickness was kept to a minimum and Will really stood up when required. Can't wait for the next adventure!

