

Pioneer's Lap Of The Map

Circumnavigation of Australia by Van de Stadt Pion

Peter Carstens had a dream to sail around Australia. He purchased “*Ling Kong*” from John Kennedy in 2006, renamed it “*Pioneer*”, and proceeded to equip the yacht to fulfil that dream.

After much careful planning Peter set off, heading south, in September 2008 and completed his trip in October 2009.

Upon his return Peter was able to say “*in all the variety of sea and weather conditions Pioneer encountered on my Australian circumnavigation not for a minute did I feel uneasy with her characteristics. Even when the motor temporarily packed it in on the final stretch from Carnarvon to Perth I could rely on her manoeuvrability in tight channels and harbours to get us home safe.*”

Below are notes and photographs of this voyage culled from emails Peter sent during the trip:

12/08/2008

Notice to Hillarys Yacht Club Cruisers:

Some of you may already know of my planned cruise around Australia on "Pioneer" (formerly "Ling Kong"). Final preparations are soon to be completed and I will depart Hillarys Yacht Club mid September for the first passage to Albany.

This Cruise will be done in monthly passages between capital cities where "Pioneer" will be penned or moored for the following month.

I suppose you could call it fly in fly out passages!! This will allow the business to keep ticking over and keep my family in touch with me. Please keep the dates on the attachment in mind with any sail making or repair needs.

If anyone is interested in cruising a passage on 'Pioneer' with me, including the first Hillary's to Albany passage, just email or phone me.

If you have reasonable sailing experience I would welcome your company aboard.

Attached is a summary of the passage dates etc.

Regards Peter Carstens S.V.'Pioneer'

28/09/2008

Pioneer is currently laying at Emu Point Marina in Albany. We had a fairly pleasant sail from Bunbury (Left on Monday 22nd September @ 1100hrs) and arrived into King George Sound on Wednesday 24th September @ 1400hrs. Wind conditions were mainly favourable, nice 6M swells still running from previous storms!

Ron Metcalf who sailed this leg with me, did a great job sharing the load.

Next leg..... Pioneer will be departing for Adelaide early October. My brother Jurgen will be flying in from New Zealand to do this leg with me. My Dad (81yrs!!) will be meeting up with us in Port Lincoln to cruise around Kangaroo Island with us.

14/01/2009

Just to let you all know that Pioneer is now birthed at Sandringham Yacht Club in Melbourne for the time being, after a pleasant trip from Adelaide with Frank Invargson as crew.

She will remain there until the middle of next month, when I shall sail the next leg to Sydney.

If anyone is interested in doing this passage, please contact me via email for I haven't finalised crew for this trip as yet.

I'm allowing One month to cover this passage Melbourne to Sydney. (17th February to 17th March 2009).

If anyone has any sail making requirements, I'm open for business as usual, until the 17th February 2009.

24/02/2009

Pioneer set sail last Saturday (21st February) from its home for the last month at Sandringham Yacht Club , which is 20 minutes outside Melbourne:



Peter had a few days delay prior to heading off due to a diesel fuel leaks which had to be sorted! His new crew member Andy King helped out here, along with a fellow yachtsman Ian, whom Peter met whilst anchored at Sandringham.



Anyway they got their sails up & headed for Queenscliff then Monday sailed onto the San Remo end (South Side) of Phillip Island.

Peter mentioned they could see the plumes from the Victorian Bush Fires over Wilson's Prom from their mooring at San Remo.

Today they were sailing onto Wilson's Promontory to "tuck" into Refuge Cove.



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At present we are awaiting Peter's update - not sure if there is mobile reception at Refuge Cove so will update you all when Peter & Andy next check in.

27/02/2009

Peter & Andy made the "strong windy sail" to Wilson's Promontory into Refuge Cove.

Then onto : LAKES ENTRANCE:



They had to "Surf PIONEER" into the Lakes Entrance after radioing an incoming Fishing Vessel & request to follow it in through the Channel. Looks like a bit of local knowledge is a good thing!

They will sail off to Eden leaving midday tomorrow (Saturday 28th February), so they can sail through the night & arrive into their next port of Eden during daylight hours.

14/03/2009

Peter & Andy sailed into Sydney Harbour rounding South Head approx 12 mid day yesterday (Friday 13th March).

They had a few days in Ulladulla on the way to Sydney and were visited by brother-in-law Neil's family. Shirley and Robyn popped on board for a cuppa and catch up. NB: Pioneer had to wait in Ulladulla for a few days for an engine part to be flown down from Brisbane, and then an engine service to be carried out.

They set sail Wednesday 11th March up the coast and into Port Hacking to anchor in Cronulla at 4pm Thursday.



This was a 26 hour sail heading into winds, variable from the North - not too comfortable to say the least!

They tucked into Cronulla Sailing Club, which was a friendly "Down to earth" place, and enjoyed the hospitality there.

At present they are at The Manly Boat Shed, which is owned & operated by Hugh Treharne, Peter's old boss from Blue Peter Sails days.



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Looks like they are a chartering boat at present as family friends will be visiting over the next few days to hop on board and sail the Sydney Harbour with them. Kerrigan's are today's passengers then Mark & Chris Mostyn tomorrow. Enjoy guys!! Wish we could be over there to join you on that beautiful waterway!

Andy's son looks like he may make the trek up from Canberra to go for a trip on the Harbour with them. Looks like all the Wellington High Crew will have to take to the Harbour on the next leg, prior to Finny & Peter sailing off to Brisbane.

30/04/2009

Subject: Port Stephens

We arrived at 1.30 pm. The swell was about 2.5m and wind up our clacker running up to 20 knots. Pete was cackling wildly half the trip like some kind of possessed person... Surfing 5 tonne of fibreglass down vertical surfaces of water.... Foam all around... Waves breaking left and right in sets about 12M apart. It was raining all the way. I swear at one point a fish jumped into our boat to get a rest from the surf! It was 14 degrees. I had an "up and go" for breakfast and it lived up to its reputation. When we arrived I faced Pete a couple of Valium and called the Phsysc' ward. He should be fine by morning when the grin wears off. Pioneer got up to 10.4kts in 15kts of tailwind plus assistance from Skipper howling "yahooooo" every couple of seconds. Bob kept calling me on the phone for Mani problems but it was all I could do to cling to the rails and stay aboard. My legs and arms ache and my head is swilling around so I'm lying down watching the ceiling spin at the moment. Happy daze Gaz.



02/05/2009

Subject: Crowdy Heads

We've moored in the fishing village on account of the total lack of breeze. Entertained ourselves with lazing in the sun and eating crab dip on crackers.... Working up the courage to wet a fishing line... I think 4 beers should do the trick and then skipper won't notice. Had a sensational start to the morning bidding farewell to fellow yachty who was training wife

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how to steer midship of the Pioneer. Some frantic instructions ... Forward aft front back back you silly woman now turn no not that hard straighten up no. No. Reverse. Too late! Pete and I couldn't push her away cause she clearly had her heart set on ramming us a midships. Good thing our fellow yachty Allan has the beard happening or he might have looked more than a little red faced over the incident. Pete seemed to take it in his stride. But Pete's got a beard too come to think of it. I calmed skipper down with my normal "it will polish off" routine. 22 years of marriage a guy learns a trick or two to calm the situation. :) love my wife to bits. She's a good driver! Gazza



04/05/2009

Ok. I've got myself a fishing rig and snuck it inboard the Pioneer while skipper was snoozing. I can't wait to toss it along behind the boat on the way to Coffs Harbour. With a bit of luck the fish will be so big we'll have to make up a bunk for it!

Some of the guys at the pub tell me that I might also need a baseball bat to use on this fish when I manage to reel him in. I figure I will just let him swim alongside for a while though... Then wrestle him on board while Pete is pre-occupied with skippering. As long as the fish weighs less than 5 tonne we should be fine!

Gaz

05/05/2009

Subject: The one that nearly got away

I snuck my line over the side by distracting skipper who had his eye on the 42 footer kite flying looming up on our six. Skip was very busy trimming sails and doing fancy things with poles and rope... Sailor stuff.... and such while I was supposed to be working the tiller. I kept him informed that the breeze had changed direction again but the reality was that I was actually playing my monster fish so as not to snap that line like a toothpick. You should have seen his face when the stark reality dawned that we had the monster from the deep at

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our aft! I reckon Pete got excited at the idea of presenting the Pioneer to Coffs Harbour with a record catch! And He was obviously overwhelmed with joy at this fishing caper and instructed me to play this big fish on board. I think his exact words were "get that stupid rope on board immediately or I'll send you in after it" ... Well sort of like that... Barring expletives.... Needless to say he will enjoy fish for dinner for many nights to come. Gaz



10/05/2009

The last part of Pete's trip to Brissy involves traversing through internal waterways from Southport so I took the opportunity to get a flight back to Sydney. Travelling now on a bus and looking down feel a little travel sickness for the first time- (well apart from that one breakfast..... Ehhhh). I learnt a few things about sailing.... Don't do it on the open seas unless you have an experienced skipper. I didn't feel unsafe at any part of the trip and that's by reason that Pete has good confidence and logical caution.... Almost a paradox but these are very Envable qualities at sea. I am also very pleased to get to know Pete better and I found him to be an extraordinarily trustworthy man that lives and let's live. Also enviable qualities in a friend. Thanks Pete for the fun, your company and an opportunity to share your dream. Living the dream bebe! I've got work to do. Oh.... One last thing... Saw some meter maids mate.... Well if they weren't real ones they were close enough to the real thing to justify the trip backwards to Tweed Heads. Too bad the entrance was closed last night eh! You'll have to catch up on the clockwise attempt around Australia. Cheers Gaz

22/06/2009

The next "leg" is under way. Peter, Alan & Dennis flew to Brisbane last Wednesday night 17th June, loaded up PIONEER with all the goodies & sailed off into the "blue yonder" on Friday 19th. They made the days sail to Maroochydoore, anchored here for the night then sailed onto Tin Can Bay off Fraser Island where they decided to spend the night Saturday 20th.



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Fraser Island has a creek called "Eli" which apparently filters out some 4 million litres of fresh water into the ocean every hour, pity they can't pump that off elsewhere I am sure the farmers would love access to this. Sunday morning after some 5 hours spent on a Sandbar cleaning the underneath and carrying out a few minor repairs to the impellor they journeyed on up to Ungowa



just up from



the Maheno Ship Wreck for the night. Today Monday they were hoping to make Urangan Hervey Bay:



and then onto Bundaberg. The trip thus far has had some moments with the crossing across the bar (Wide Bay) into Rainbow Beach a little hairy (white knuckle stuff):



Two likely lads at sea:



23/06/2009

Our On-Board Journalist Dennis has taken on the new "Log Book Journal" job.

Subject: Sailing update

THURSDAY

Hi everybodyarrived Brisbane about 5am after a quick 3 1/2 hour flight from Perth.

The boat was moored in a muddy tidal creek off the Brisbane river . Met Peters father

Herman who lives on a boat there [a lovely old gent]

left Brisbane river on Friday morning about 8 am en-route to Mooloolaba, arrived at about 5.30pm on dark. Good weather and wind.

Mooloolaba has a beautiful waterway canal and marina and is a beautiful place.

SATURDAY

left Mooloolaba early had a wonderful sail past Maroochydore, Noosa and past Double Island Point then onto Tin Can Bay near Fraser Island. A good sail with 25 knots wind and a solid 3 to 4 metre swell.

The bar crossing into Wide Bay was to say the least, exciting, with a heavy swell which were breaking either side of the barely 100 metre wide channel . Peter was as cool as a cucumber as he surfed his 30 foot Pioneer on the steeper swells across the bar. Very difficult to spot the channel from seaward and pleased to have chart plotter to guide us through.

Tucked up in Tin can Bay for the night and will head through the Great Sandy Straight tomorrow.

The straight is very, very, long - about 55 nautical miles and many kilometres wide, ranging from extremely deep to very shallow.

SUNDAY

Departed Tin Can Bay headed through The Great Sandy Straight on a falling 3 metre tide. A couple of hours into the journey touched bottom on a shallow bank.

We stayed there till the tide bottomed and Pioneer heeled well over and were able to walk around the boat and clean the hull. Able to sail away again on an incoming tide, about 5 hours after grounding.

Moored at night in the straight, in a deep hole at Ungowa - most of the shallow areas now behind us.

MONDAY

Sailed and motored to Urangan and into the marina. WET, WET, WET - so much for the 'sunny Queensland' logo.

Tomorrow hope to head off to Bundaberg if forecast improves [about 50 nautical miles] Bcnu all soon - Dennis

Saturday 27th June 2009

Spent the morning swimming, cleaning the bottom of Pioneer, and preparing to leave this beautiful place.

The day was shaping up well, sunny with a reasonable breeze.

We up anchor on a rising 3 1/2 metre tide and Pioneer headed out of Pancake Creek over the shallows. A couple of miles out we hoisted the sails and headed of towards Gladstone a mere 28 nautical miles north. The wind turned out to be 24 - 27 knots from a northerly aspect... right on the nose, with a short steep chop the whole way to Gladstone.

Arrived into Gladstone Harbour just on dark and motored through the long Harbour to Auckland Creek. It is a lot different to how Peter remembers it about 35 years previously. He was amazed at the amount infrastructure in place at the Harbour and how much bigger it had grown

Pioneer travelled into Auckland Creek then turned right into a very large and beautiful Marina, where we spent the night.

The Marina was clean and a well looked after family friendly place. There are acres of well kept lawns and gardens with BBQ's and gazebo everywhere. Surprisingly there were no gates on the marina floating pontoons and people were free to wander in and out at their will. The place had a good feel about it.

We had a meal at the yacht club where Peter caught up with some fellow yachties and a bit of history. He seems to know yachties everywhere we go.

Sunday 28th June 2009

Gladstone ...through The Narrows, between Curtis Island & Mainland.

An interesting stretch of water with many shallows and needed to be navigated with c. The middle section is called Cattle Crossing which dries out completely at low tide and vehicles were lined up waiting for the dry to drive across to Curtis Island.

We left Gladstone with the wind on the nose again and only limited sailing along the winding passage. Pioneer's 6 foot draft was always going to be touch and go during the middle section. Around this area Peter had unfurled the jib which picked up a nice gust of breeze as the keel of the boat slipped through the mud in a couple of spots.....thankfully slipping out into deeper water again.

Spent the night in a creek at the northern end of the Narrows.

Monday 30 June 2009

Mixture of sailing and motor sailing to the Keppel Island group today, arriving at Great Keppel Island about 4:00pm.

Had a good swim and walk there....the beach and island were beautiful and seem to be getting better the further north we travel. Had sundowners on 'Bloodhound' a SS34 owned by Tom and Nancy, farmers from NSW... we had last met them at Pancake Creek

Tuesday 1st July

Great Keppel Island to Port Clinton

Had a reasonable sail into this isolated anchorage arriving quite late. It is a huge bay and creek with lots of anchorage room. A very quiet and beautiful spot.

In a couple of days this area will be closed and the military is going to bomb the hell out of it with their live firing exercises.

Spent a pleasant day and another night there.

Thursday 3rd July

Headed off to Island head Creek.... probably the best anchorage we have head with a large protected bay and a deep creek that ran for miles.

Stayed there the night

Friday 4th July

.... then decided to make the overnight sail to Mackay about 130 nautical miles further north.

There were a number of yachts and stink boats doing the same thing, most of them, like us had been waiting for favourable southerly winds.

Well we got them alright. Sailed at 7:00pm with strengthening south west winds through a maze of islands out towards the Percy group. Around 2:00 am we decided to shelter behind Purdow Island about 29 miles from Mackay. While at anchor Pioneer was belted with very strong bullets of breeze from the high hilly island that made the anchorage extremely uncomfortable.

A few hours later we headed off for Mackay... a very uncomfortable sail with wind strengths consistently in the mid thirties and varying in directions. The classic saying 'The sea was angry that day my friends' springs to mind. All in all, a fairly uncomfortable sail. The high point of this passage was Peter's skill in dodging and weaving through the countless number of islands and rocks through the night.

We arrived at Mackay around midday Saturday and discovered that a 13 metre power boat had swamped somewhere in the area we had been sailing and the occupants had been safely winched off by helicopter.

15/07/2009

Hi All



Peter touched base and the "Crew" is now his brother Jurgen who has just flown into Cairns from Auckland to meet Peter. They arrived into Port Douglas today (Wed 15th July):



David & Alan have completed their leg to Cairns:



and Dennis Trew is also back in Perth safe and sound. Hope they all enjoyed their time aboard Pioneer.

Peter tells me the phone reception isn't too good from now around to Darwin, so I'll pass on the odd little update as he gets in contact. We will have to all text him on 17th July & wish him Happy Birthday!!

Just heard there was an earthquake off South Island of New Zealand (Down on the southern part of the west coast that measured 6.6) No doubt it will be on the news tomorrow (Peter & Jurgen will probably hear the news in the morning and I've sent on a message), We can keep our eye on details, but at this point they have taken off the Tsunami alert on Australia's East Coast from NSW down to Vic and Tassie. Let's hope the East Aussie coast is left alone & unharmed.

30/07/2010

Peter & Jurgen made it into Gove on Monday 27th just after dark, after 3 days and 2 nights sailing across The Gulf Carpentaria. They apparently had good winds along the 350mile stretch, but said it was "like a bloody Washing Machine out there" with the waves/tides coming in 4 different directions, there were currents and with the wind comes nasty confused cross-seas.

They convoyed across the Gulf & kept in radio contact with two English ladies on a Bowen 47'. Nice to have company out in the middle of no-where!

Again they stocked up on Food/goodies & will make their way along the Northern Territory coast line to Darwin. Won't be any phone boxes to touch base until Darwin, which they should sail into on the 3rd August. Apparently they will be sailing through a passage called THE HOLE IN THE WALL, between the Wessel Islands, I'll post a picture I found to view...



... looks shallow in places! Hope the navigation equipment works!

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Meanwhile Paul is getting ready to leave Wellington NSW, fly into Darwin and jump aboard Pioneer for the next leg....Darwin to ????. Perhaps Perth will have to wait another trip and they may anchor into Northern WA somewhere?? We will await an update from the Skipper. Anyway, not to starvePaul has his fishing gear packed ad ready to use to supply the "next leg" shift sail with fresh goodies from the Ocean!! May show you up with the catch of the day there Gary!

04/08/2009

Peter sent on this picture he took of "Sunset at Darwin" from Fannie Bay:



They sailed into here 4am on 03/08/09. Jurgen & Peter had good trade winds to get them from Gove to Darwin, SE 15 - 25kts. Although they did get "becalmed" coming up to the Vernon Islands:



So they ended up motoring quite a bit from here and had to work the ocean currents to get the most favourable path navigate. They spent most of the last four days prior to entering Darwin off shore due to the Arnhem Land restrictions with entering the sacred area - Arnhem Land is Aboriginal land situated in the north east corner of Australia's Northern Territory.

The new crew member Paul Drew, has since jumped aboard (with a new phone for Peter ...compliments of the skippers son Greg!! Not too happy about lending Dad his phone, told him not to get it wet!!) Jurgen flew out from Darwin today. Thanks Jurgen for sailing the Gulf with Peter - the two brothers had time out and now Jurgen heads back to NZ (via Brisbane for a few days).

Pioneer is now anchored until Thursday at the New Tipperary Waters Marina. The Marina is based upon an old creek which has been widened, dredged out and developed with houses all around it and a lock to handle the big tides. The Loch was an interesting experience for Peter, not having been through one before.

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Pioneer in Darwin:



For the next "Leg", they will sail from Darwin to Perth venturing around the tip of WA & down the west coast.....as my brother puts it "it's all downhill sailing now". May not make it all the way to here, but hopes to get as far as Geraldton before the 10th September, when Peter has work to finish and Paul needs to get back to Wellington for work.

08/09/2009

Got back to Perth last Tuesday (1st September) and been busy with work and family getting to know them again.

Update on the trip from Broome:



Saw Hundreds of whales between the Kimberleys & Dampier.

We left Broome on Monday the 24th August out of "pure necessity" to get away from the unprotected and very rollie anchorages. It was a long and tedious sail to windward towards Dampier, by-passing Port Headland, and just making our land fall at Point Sampson on Thursday 27th at 8pm. Had to wait outside the Fishing Boat Harbour channel for the tide to rise!



We spent a day catching up on sleep/eating there.

Saturday 29th we sailed around the Burrup Peninsula & Lengendre Island onto Dampier, where Pioneer now lies on a mooring outside the Hampton Harbour Boating & Sailing Club. Very hospitable people up there and I have a few people looking out for the boat while I'm back in Perth for a few weeks (sorting out a back log of sail orders!).

Planning to leave here around 22nd September and take approximately 2 weeks to sail back to Perth.



Pioneer anchored off Dampier:



21/09/2009

Dampier Harbour

Today we spent the morning cleaning the rig and mast and halyards etc. from all the iron ore dust. Got our groceries and provisions and a decent weather window seems to be approaching for departure for tomorrow (Tuesday 22nd).

Fingers crossed on some favourable winds for the next week, hopefully our next port of call will be Onslow or Exmouth depending on conditions.

Bob (who joined me today) and I are both nursing a bit of a lurgy happening and are practicing synchronised coughing, but OK. Staying at Bob's daughter (Joanne) house in Dampier which is very convenient as to getting groceries etc, in Karratha.

Due to my wife dobbing us in, we conducted a radio interview today at ABC Karratha, don't know when it will go to air. Weather is like summer (eat your heart out!), except yesterday was 25kts plus, from the SW, don't need too many of those in the direction we are heading. However, we are expecting some headwinds before Perth on the way.

Because we have the luxury of a laptop, we will keep you updated on our progress.

22/09/2009 - Dampier to Cape Preston

Took all gear to the boat and discovered the dingy high and dry, so Peter rowed and motored to the fuel jetty, where Bob had carted the stores.

We said our goodbyes to Joanne and family and motored out of Dampier harbour at 0930 into a light WNW, so we motored for a couple of hours until the wind picked up to about 12 - 18 knots - up went the sails and a good days sailing was had.

We saw a big mining development at Cape Preston, which had us bluffed as to what it was. Trucks appeared to be driving on the water - up close it revealed a new breakwater and port facility being built, and trucks bringing in ore from a mine further on.

Had to do a bit of back tracking when the depth gauge suddenly dropped to a couple of meters. Did a fair bit of zigzagging through the day dodging the many small islands and shoals

The wind dropped during the night, so we motored with amazing speed over the ground at some times of 7.7 Knots with a big tide pushing us through Mary Anne Passage. ("spat us through there" Pete's description)

We did 2 hourly shifts on average and it was pretty tough sleeping with the engine noise, but we both achieved some rest and eventually sleep.

23/09/2009 - Cape Preston to Exmouth

No wind, so more motoring. Peter dived on the prop and rudder which had captured a tangle of weed.

Through the day we witnessed several pods of whales doing their spectacular crashing performances, we saw some wonderful sights, Once we thought we heard an explosion, only to see yet another whale crashing back to the sea. Amazing stuff! Over a dozen sightings, some quite close.

From inside the cabin at one stage you could hear quite audibly the sounds of the whales "cries". It really is an eerie sound.

This area is WA's gas and oil fields, passed countless rigs, production platforms, island based storage facilities and saw a few service craft, still no other yachts (The ocean is all ours!)

The wind finally came in (12 – 14kts, WNW) at about 2pm, allowing a quieter run with conversation and a more relaxed mode, cruising at 5 knots.

Passed Onslow, visible by the salt piles, which we originally thought was a boat or long white beach.

As night approached the wind increased, and the chop increased. It steadily increased and changed direction which had us changing tack a few times, an hour or so after we entered Exmouth gulf, it become very strong, and with 30 mile to go was on the nose. We decided to go straight for it under motor and had a bouncy trip across the gulf. About halfway across, we were getting a few waves over the boat (on with the wet weather gear).

As we approached the Exmouth marina we were bashing into a 30 knot wind. We tied up around 1 pm, secured the boat and went to sleep in around 0.5 microseconds.

24/09/2009 - Exmouth Marina

A great sleep, had the world's best shower, and hot breaky, checked the weather on the net.

Friday looks a bit blowy, so we plan to go only to Tantabiddi about 30 mile around NW cape and a little way down Ningaloo Reef. We may get a chance to dive the reef here, be nice if we see a whale shark.

We were set to walk the 5 km to town when the harbourmaster offered us a lift, gratefully accepted. Had a look around Exmouth shopping area (took about 10 minutes!), then walked back. On the way we spoke to the sale lady selling land at the new marina. It is going to be a huge development - all canal blocks sold and other housing blocks are still for sale. Block size is around 230 sq mtr! (Makes Bob's half acre in the hills seem like a ranch). It is going to be high density communal living, a bit like the developments at the Geraldton marina area.

We had another coffee at the new Novatel Resort on the walk back. We looked at the menu prices and decided on a meal somewhere (anywhere) else. The pub does a good curry we are told.

25/09/2009 - Exmouth to Tantabiddi

We waited until 0930 for the wind to ease a little then set off NW Cape and around, then south to a safe anchorage called Tantabiddi, about 30 mile but which took a good part of the day. We saw many whales (more bloody whales !!), On the way Peter got a call from Cran and Anne and their guset Carmel on the cat "Lettin Go" that he had met in the Kimberley and who asisted him with fuel . They do it in style, champers, crackers and cheese and all on a huge 50' cat which you play tennis on. We had a couple of beers and Peter played "remember the Kimberley " with our hosts. Lovely people, but we got drenched on the short ride to their boat. Had 40 knot winds overnight, not much sleep.

26/09/2009 – from Tantabiddi

We again planned an early start, but with assistance of an updated weather report from Cran, we left about 0930. The plan was to springboard from Tantabiddi to Carnarvon, making stops only if the weather turned really bad. More bloody whales.... enough said. It is eerie to hear their calls when lying on your bunk, it's easy to imagine why the early sailors were very superstitious about them.

Lots of fish jumping - probably being stirred up by bigger fish.

Sailed through the night in short 2 hour shifts. Quite rough and got waves over the bow (and on us) several times). The wind dropped so lots of motoring and noisy sleeps.

We had planned to stop at Maud's Landing (Coral Bay) in the morning for a couple of hours steady sleep but as we neared at around 06:00, three yachts left Coral Bay obviously south bound, so we decided they must have a good weather window, and we followed them.

27/09/2009

Trouble with motor, didn't seem to be driving properly, and with no or little wind, Peter dived on the prop suspecting weed. Water temperature made Pete's voice suitable for a tenor.

Bob played with the motor, found a couple of things but still no good. Motor will not now start, so we have decided to push on to Carnarvon

Saw jumping sword fish quite near the boat, but couldn't reach, that would have made a nice meal.

In the night there was a swallow that tried to land accompanying us, he managed a couple of times and was with us for hours

Sailed through the night - second night of this leg. A whale gave Bob a fright when it crossed the bow with a loud bellow, and a whoosh, then dived very close to the boat. We looked at Cape Cuvier which has a very long and well lit jetty (salt exporter), but decided to push on, after all we didn't want to risk getting too much sleep! Did 2 hour watches but sleep very difficult under the rocky conditions. A wave came over both of us during a change-over which required a change of clothes before the change of shift.

28/09/2009 – to Carnarvon

Good winds today, ESE forecast to turn SW later, so with no motor, on we pushed. Still more whales, more jumping fish. One whale surfaced about 10M away, and stayed with us for a bit. We discussed what would happen if whales became sexually attracted to our boat, and decided we would not like to be on board during the mating.

Our ice has melted, and the ice locker is a bit pongy, lunch was still good (a wrap with ham cheese etc. - no salmonella so far, so looking good!). Yesterday we were so busy, we forgot to have lunch!

Making a cup of tea on Pioneer is a challenge that I (Bob) have mastered, without mishap so far, - it requires lots of balancing and wedging yourself in un-natural positions... at unusual angles of horizon). But it's worth it on a morning after a long night.

Made it to Carnarvon, walked to the pub found everything closed as it is a public holiday. Found a take away and had fish and salad and hamburger (good stuff!) then went back to the pub and asked if we could use a shower, no problems, it felt very good, although the floor was faulty - it kept rocking! Back to the boat and slept 10 hours after a long trip and not much sleep.

Peter rang tonight just after they arrived into Carnarvon - maybe I should say limped there, as the engine wasn't 100%, so they are now going to have to find a diesel mechanic check it out.

29/09/2009 - in Carnarvon

Woke to rain, walked to a nice brekky and coffee, not to mention bodily functions, sorry but this is a complete log.

Mechanic was organised by Bob's friend Mick Turvey, who came down and worked on the motor, found injectors dirty, valves out of adjustment and eventually, the fuel pump failed! (He was a nice bloke, Conrad, ex yachtie, a yarpie. He is coming back tomorrow when he gets a new pump.

Did laundry and shopping today, got cab back. Very cold day. We got a weather report from an internet cafe printed out, there is a good few days window coming up, should get us to Gero'.

We walked to town, got rained on, and had a beer with other yachties, Tony, Bob, and also met Rockin' Ronnie and his mate Mike Keenan. Interesting blokes, both land yachties, and a few kangaroos short in the top paddock? Peter left cards to drum up business in a new area!

We had a nice meal at the Gascoyne pub restaurant, and got a cab back. Still blowing! Tightened up Tony's mooring lines expecting a heavy blow tonight - we are rafted up to him.

30/09/2009

Peter looks like a grease monkey having just changed the oil on the motor.

We are planning an early departure tomorrow now motor is fixed (new fuel pump fitted this morning). The weather is looking much better, still pretty cold though

01/10/2009

Thursday 1st Carnarvon to Steep Point

Left Carnarvon - Motor still U/s. Won't rev when loaded. Looks like a Geraldton repair job.

Feeling fresh after some good sleeps. Heaps of whales. Saw some turtles and one sea snake floating on the surface out at sea. Wind on the nose (for a change, not), very choppy. As the night wore on the chop became quite intense and steep fronted, lots of tacking as we neared the southern end of Shark Bay.

Thanks to the chart plotter, we dropped anchor just before sunrise, pretty stuffed, at Steep Point.

02/10/2009

Steep Point onwards

Had 2 or 3 hours sleep, when we woke we saw 3 other yachts there, all of which left heading either north or to Denham. Spoke to one skipper, who said he was waiting until next week for a better window. We decided to push on, as a good SE wind would push us out into the ocean. Left about 8am.

Saw lots of what we thought were kites off the headland, which turned out to be helium balloons that fisherman use to get their lines out off the rocks using the wind to hold their lines off the cliffs. The things that some people do to catch a fish! Maybe a dozen balloons!

Saw a few ships off the coast; we tacked way out on the SE, and back on the SW. Very strong winds overnight > 25kts, pretty knackered.

03/10/2009

On the high seas to Geraldton

Winds on the nose as always, pretty tiring with little sleep. Too rough to make a meal, lots of snacks from packets. Had a cup of soup which was a highlight (sad isn't it!). More bloody whales!

So rough toilet duties was quite tricky – no more information required.

Passed Kalbarri. Wind increase and went SW. At 5 pm 25 – 30kts – rough, wet – no sleep!

90 minute shifts through the night was all we could manage

04/10/2009

Into Geraldton

SSE wind, 30 mile out WRONG! (1 am). We both just wanted to get to Gero' after such a rough couple of days. The weather forecast was quite wrong; the patterns may have come sooner than forecast.

Tacked into very rough seas, on the nose – Geraldton was looming on the horizon, but was frustratingly out of reach, until we slowly worked our way zigzagging almost unproductively towards our target. We were beaten by some wind shifts.

The last 30 mile took 11 hours, we were pretty exhausted when we finally blew into Geraldton and berthed in the marina without a motor. We were assisted by cat Seawind 1000 crew Ian and Jill (Peter knew them).

Rang Bobs mate Bill, who picked us up and fed us a beautiful roast and a glass of wine. We tried hard not to drop off to sleep. Saw Bills boat 31 foot American Sharpie lift keel design mono hull glass over timber – (triple diagonal plywood construction), no rigging two mast.

Checked and no weather window for at least a week. Crashed on the boat for 3 hours, then had a nice meal with Ian and Jill on their cat. After which, seriously crashed for 10 hours of sleep.

Pioneer's Lap Of The Map

05/10/2009

Geraldton

Ian and Jill got away first light. Nice day for a change, with little wind.

Bob would like to thank Peter for a wonderful (if somewhat tiring) experience, and wish him fair sailing on his final leg of his great achievement of circumnavigating Australia in his courageous little Van de Stadt Pion 30 "Pioneer".



10/10/2009

Dad gets back from his LAP of the MAP..... Tomorrow!



Due to arrive at Hillarys Marina on Sunday 11th October at 4pm - rain, hail, snow or shine! Uncle Neil is jumping on board at Mindarie and will sail the last leg with Dad and Lars to bring Pioneer home. All those who are around to greet him as he sails into Hillarys Yacht Club Marina are welcome to come down and cheer him in and celebrate this huge trip of a life time.

In Summary

Hi All

After lots of windward sailing from Dampier to Geraldton with a few stops in between, & onto Hillarys Yacht Club. We encountered strong head winds from Exmouth down. It was a relief to be back in my home waters once again. Was great to receive such a warm welcome into HYC from not only family & friends but I was privileged enough to have the Commodore Jim Sutfield to acknowledge my safe return.

For the last 450 nautical miles Pioneer was without a functioning engine. It's good that she is a great handling boat & was able to sail into even the tightest marina berths. (Who needs a motor!!)

I'd like to sincerely thank all of you for your moral support during my voyage around this great continent we live in.

*It's only just starting to sink in, as to what I have actually achieved. With all the contributions of Photo's, Emails & Disc's compiled from my various crews & friends I can't **Thank You** enough. They will be my reminder of the miles & memories for many years to come.*

I would like to especially thank my sailing Crew (Who persevered with my whims & wishes at all hours of day & night):

Perth to Albany : Ron Metcalf, Albany to Adelaide : My brother Jurgen (& Dad for across the SA Gulfs), Adelaide to Melbourne : Frank Ingvarson, Melbourne to Sydney: Andy King, Sydney to Brisbane : Gary Finn (With Reger Mostyn to Newcastle) Brisbane to Cairns : Denis Trew, Alan Paul, Cairns to Darwin : My brother Jurgen again, Darwin to Dampier : Paul Drew, Dampier to Geraldton : Bob Emery, Geraldton to Mindarie : Lars Millfers & Finally.. Mindarie to Hillarys Yacht Club : Neil Greening & Alasdair Watson

Pioneer's Lap Of The Map

To all who crewed with me, I hope you gained something valuable out of the experience. I feel I have gained from getting to know you all better. You made the whole experience so much richer for me! Also to their families for allowing their Leave Pass!!

I have enjoyed & appreciated reading all your response emails throughout the trip.

Lastly but not least, Thanks to my lovely wife Melita for holding down the Fort & supporting me on my voyage, & to Greg & Livi, who were equally supportive to their Mum while I was away, thanks kids!!

Regards

Peter Carstens & S. V. Pioneer.

