

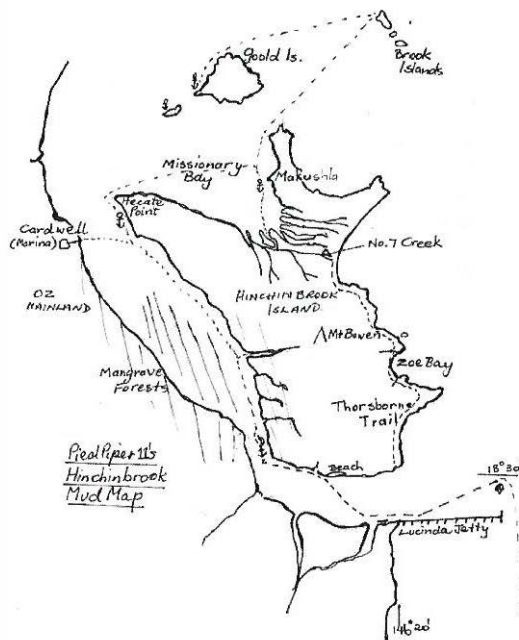
available, access to Hinchinbrook and Dunk Islands, and with Cairns only a short sail away it is a great location.

[I hope you have it on file. Otherwise it will need editing to remove the text I have copied.]

After spending two days at Missionary Bay on Hinchinbrook Island doing rain forest walks to Cape Richards, we've moved to Creek No 7, where we will stay until the current gale and strong wind warnings predicted for tomorrow (Wednesday 19 July) and the rest of the week have passed. The strong winds will keep the sandflies and mosquitoes away (so we are told). Being in the creek is not such a bad thing, as we have access to the boardwalk leading to the world renowned Thornsborne Trail. (Ignorance on our part meant we had never heard of it!). The trail takes roughly three days to complete and is limited to 40 walkers in groups of six, who are required to be self-sufficient.

For those of you who follow our route: once we clear customs for the Louisiades (early August) we'll try to keep the anticipated five day sail progress updated on www.pangolin.co.nz. You will find us under 'boat reports' and then scroll through the list for our call sign VHS 2218.

PS. If you are interested in the Hinchinbrook area, a free brochure titled *Marine Wonders of Hinchinbrook* published by the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority is available from the towns around Hinchinbrook Island, including Cardwell and the Port Hinchinbrook Marina.



The Moncrieff sketch map of Hinchinbrook Island and Channel (Squadron Quarterly December 2003: 41).

Also any RSAYS friends who have received this can find out a great deal of information from an article written by Ian and Di Moncrieff published in *Squadron Quarterly*, December 2003.

In a postscript E-mail Di reports that Helen and Mike had three pre-loved Squadron sails in the *Piping Shrike* lockers destined for sailing canoe rigs to help the people of the Louisiades. SQ

Some News from Epsilon

Michael Tromp

These are some extracts from an E-mail from Michael Tromp on the recent voyage of *Epsilon* from Auckland to Brisbane. They had a good time in and around Auckland and had planned to leave in June and sail further east out into the Pacific for six months. Because of some matters relating to obtaining residency in Australia for one of them, they were obliged to return prematurely to this country.

'Four of us left from Opua on the 12 May bound for Brisbane. Unfortunately sailing offshore and time commitments don't go hand in hand. It was therefore a tough decision to leave with a deep low just off Brisbane, right in our path. We had figured by the time we got there it would slip down to the south. It sort of did, but this gave us strong head winds for the first 3-4 days and lots of rain as we passed through an associated trough of low pressure. We sailed almost 100 miles north of our course trying to get better weather. This meant we would miss out on a stop at Middleton Reef, which was disappointing.

'Just as the first low slipped down towards NZ, a second one formed right in our path. We again headed north, but on the next forecast we heard it was also heading east-north-east, so gave up and headed straight for Brisbane and just prepared ourselves for the worst. The wind freshened over night to 40-50 knots and with gusts hitting 60 we dropped all sail, including the mainsail which already had 4 reefs in it. We carried on under bare poles at 4-6 knots on a broad reach. Occasionally I would bear away to pick up speed or avoid a wave and we would speed up, hitting 9 knots at one stage. Not bad with no sail!

'As dawn arrived the wind quickly dropped to 10 knots and we were left floundering around with no wind and a large confused sea. We soon realized we were in the eye of the low. It was perfect blue sky above with a solid dark cloud around us on all horizons. It was an amazing experience. We motored for an hour and carried out a few sail repairs. About five slides had broken free from the mainsail during the previous night.



Epsilon in the 1999 Sydney-Hobart Race (Photograph by Richard Bennett).

'As expected, the wind returned as strong as before from the opposite direction at a solid 45 knots with gusts up in the 60s, again accompanied by torrential rain. We carried on under bare poles all morning until by noon it had moderated enough for a tiny bit of headsail. The waves were big, but we managed to avoid the angry ones and only really had one lie us over and deposit itself over us and in the cockpit. By late evening we had full sail and it was all over. The last few days were a mixture of rain squalls, calms and good sailing.

'Unfortunately, due to our starter motor burning out, we had no engine for the last few days, but thankfully the wind held. It died as we sailed into Moreton Bay and headed for Manly marina. The last few metres we were paddling until towed by some friendly yachties in their dinghy.

Customs gave us the biggest search I have ever seen, with three guys and a sniffer dog. They spent a good hour going over the whole boat, including looking inside the water tanks with a miniature camera! They were generally friendly, but I found one of them quite intimidating. He asked several questions about where my 'secret hiding spots' were and kept on saying, 'Come on, everyone has them.' They found nothing...

'Our address is c/o SYC Marina, Macarthur Parade, Main Beach. 4217 Qld. SQ

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