June 27, 2014 Big Bay, Stuart Island to Forward Harbor

Nasty, bumpy, and windy, best describes the weather conditions starting from early Friday June 27. We felt the wind picking up late in the afternoon while visiting with the caretakers on the 26th, but didn’t think that much about it at that time. During the night and early morning a very low pressure system landed right over us. John had to get up, close all the windows and then zip the curtains on the flybridge as well. We left Big Bay a little later than we had originally planned to because one of the house battery meters got out of sync and John wanted to make sure that everything was working ok. We still had time to transit all the rapids safely (really nice when it is all going our direction). Our goal was to try and make it up Johnstone Strait, zip around the Broken Islands, and on to Lagoon Cove; however, we could see that our plans were rapidly fading away with the low clouds, wind, and rain becoming a serious factor as we came down Chancellor Channel. With poor visibility we were really glad that we had radar and shortly after, we made the decision to head into Forward Harbor, dropping an anchor to wait out the storm.

Many boaters use this harbor because the anchorage is good and it’s usually calm once you are inside. The ‘usually calm’ waters had white caps plus a N.W. wind blowing straight down on us. We anchored securely while preparing to spend the night. Rebecca took some greenling from the freezer to thaw for dinner and we settled in. After a nice meal of fish and brussel sprouts we went to bed early, in anticipation of good weather in the morning.

June 28, 2014 Forward Harbor to Lagoon Cove on the northwest end of East Cracroft Island

During the night the wind and rain increased but by 4:00 am it started to calm down. Unfortunately the weather out on Johnstone was still kicking up so John started the genset, turned on the heaters, and made coffee. It is now 7:00 a.m. and we’re in a waiting period staying occupied by listening to the weather and reading.

Well 30 minutes is all it took for the weather to change. The winds dropped and the skies opened up to let some sunshine through. About 7:30 a.m., after first cup of coffee, John noticed other boaters were pulling their hooks and getting ready to depart. We made a last minute listen to the weather channel, and it reported that winds at Fanny Island were at 11 knots; guess what, we pulled hooks and departed at 7:42 a.m., and headed down the Sunderland Channel to Johnstone Strait. The water was rippled and the wind was behind us. After that it was just a short run up to the Broken Islands, hang a right to go up Havannah Channel, and then hang a left to go up Chatham Channel where it takes us to Lagoon Cove after going through the Blowhole. We did see our first bear of the trip midway up Chatham Channel due to a boat that was coming towards us with a lady waving and pointing to a bear on shore off our starboard side. Rebecca was able to get a photo, but it was a long distance shot. When we passed the post office/bakery we were sad to see that the house and store where the lady baker Jennifer lives, had several for sale signs posted. She made the best rye bread and cinnamon buns ever and we always look forward to picking some up at Lagoon Cove. Before entered the Blowhole, we called on the radio to Lagoon Cove and reached Pat, to make moorage arrangements and purchase diesel. (We arrived at Lagoon Cove at 11:16 a.m. with average speed of travel 9.6 knots. Current was going our way, again, and Johnstone had a southeast wind lightly blowing the same direction as the outgoing tide. When the two are opposite, it tends to get a bit choppy.) They were very busy taking care of boaters, but as always helped to get us tied up safe and secure. We plan on staying for a few days, catching up with Bob and Pat and enjoying the ambiance of this beautiful location. We were surprised to see Jean Barber here and she came down to give her usual friendly welcome. She had been working in her garden and her clothes fit the part. This is one of our favorite destinations. For ‘happy hour’ tonight, there will be lots of prawns and very friendly, happy boaters to chat with over various snacks that all of the boaters bring up as well. Jean Barber still owns Lagoon Cove with Bob and Pat running the docks and keeping all boaters tied in smoothly at the docks; amongst all of the other things they do to welcome boaters and make this location a happy experience for all who stop in for the night.