

Letter from Presto! #2

Cape Eleuthera, 29th March 2014

Man-o-War is still an active boat building island, the Albury family still build wooden sailing boats and they also have a fiberglass business building Skiffs, which are sought after and are great sea boats.

We left Man-o-War on Saturday 15th March, after a pleasant stay and a ferry ride to Marsh Harbour on Great Abaco. We got sorted with a small sim card from BTC (Bahamas Tel. Co.)

We had bought a sim card in Grand Cay and it would only fit in Rodger's phone as they didn't have a "cutter" to make it fit in my new Android! So after a trim, my phone could receive the internet and local phone calls. Unfortunately it is not compatible with Rodger's computer so he cannot use it as a hotspot to get his emails! OH WELL!



We had a good sail from Man-o-War to Hope town, where we were to meet an old friend from Nassau on Tuesday the 18th. We anchored outside the harbour and saw lots of turtles; more this year than ever. Hope Town has a small mooring field, and most of the cruising boats seem to be permanently ensconced on their coffee grounds, but the town is charming, with attractive buildings, a great museum, post office and very friendly people.



Rudder felt awkward

A Core Sound 17 (just like Phil's boat) sailed around us and then the owner came back in a Boston Whaler to visit along with his Labrador, Rudder, a Mares look-alike if ever I saw one: see photo. Rudder was invited aboard and made himself comfortable on the seat between the engine box and the cockpit coaming like an old hand! Syd has a Norwalk Island Sharpie as well as the Core Sound, he later visited us in Little Harbour in an ex-racing Maine lobster boat! Boat mad in the best way.

I had decided to make bread dough from a recipe that our friend Roxy gave me; as you can see the container was not quite big enough! We had some good pizza cooked in a frying pan, foccacia, and a not so good loaf cooked in a saucepan, but it was delicious tasting.



The Rising of the Bread

Come Monday, the wind had changed to the southwest and we decided to move down to White Sound Harbour, about 5 miles away from Hope Town. We went to the southeast corner and anchored in a tiny area, which was practically landlocked at low tide, just big enough for *Presto!*.



Presto! in White Sound Harbour

Tuesday, we hitched a ride into town, Rodger got Wifi, we posted some cards and had lunch at Capt'n Jacks. That afternoon squalls came through and although we were a bit worried about *Presto!*, we knew that she would be safe in her little basin. We met up with Melissa and caught up with news of old friends and promised to meet again next time we come through the Bahamas. We got a ride straight away (Bahamians are very kind in picking up the odd looking people who are cruising through) and got back to *Presto!* to find that the squall was more local to Hope Town and it hardly rained where we were.

Next day we sailed down the lee of Elbow Cay, past Tilloo and Lynyard Cays to Little Harbour, a perfect circular harbor with a shallow bar at the entrance, but not a problem for a sharpie. There was a big sea running in the ocean, with 3 – 4 meter swells. We decided to wait a day for the wind to come round and the swells to diminish so in the morning we hitched to Cherokee Sound, about 5 miles down the coast, a very shallow area which has the longest wooden pier in the Commonwealth, 770 feet long. Unfortunately a hurricane destroyed the restaurant at the end of the pier and no yachts seem to go there as it is a calm weather anchorage, not good when there is a surge. The Settlement itself was quite amazing; very neat and tidy houses, gardens and streets, mostly white Bahamians with interesting accents, rather like old West Country accents from Devon or Cornwall in the UK.



A quiet street in tidy Cherokee settlement

Getting a lift back was a little more difficult as there was no traffic! We got a ride part way with 2 ladies and then a truck gave us a lift a little further and we walked the last mile, which gave us a nice view of *Presto!* at the bottom of the hill.



Presto! at Little Harbour

Little Harbour is the home of the author of 'An artist on his Island', Randolph Johnston and was a famous sculptor, with bronze statues in Nassau and the foundry is still working in this tiny place. His son and grandson have taken over as Randolph died at the age of 88 in 1992. Walking around there are bronze statues of rays, sharks, birds and people everywhere and a gallery of his work and that of the sons. Quite an impressive family.

We had a great sail from Abaco to Spanish Wells, the large swells reminded us of sailing across the Atlantic, still 3 – 4 meters but no waves and a nice steady breeze from the Northeast, and we made good time and anchored off Meeks Patch, about 4 miles from town. Instead of going into town we had been invited to dock at Chris and Rachel Morejohn's one-slip Marina on Russell Island immediately in front of their tiny waterfront house, "The Tight Spot".



Presto! in "The Tight Spot". Hogfish anchored off.

We tied up there for two days until the wind went to the southwest and then tucked into the basin and tied to the concrete wall. We were treated extremely well, filled up our water jugs, had showers, did laundry and ate some delicious meals. We had been there last time we were in Spanish Wells and as usual had a great time. We celebrated Rachel's birthday on the 25th March and left the next day with a reefed fore and 25 kts of wind and a sloppy, short following sea, taking only an hour to do the 8 miles to Current Cut, we went from sailing at 8.5 knots to 2 with the current against us.

Soon though, we were out of the current and still trucking along, our destination for the night Pineapple Cays, which gave us a fair lee from the swell. Left early the next day and sailed to Cape Eleuthera. We anchored in a landlocked basin which had been carved out in the 50's, someone's dream gone astray as happens in so many places in the Bahamian islands. Rodger had connections with the Island School and we met Chris Maxey, its founder and Jason Kincaid, and had a tour of the facility, very impressive and well worth checking out their website. www.islandschool.org We have been here for 3 days of strong Easterlies and tomorrow promises us fair winds to head for Cat Island.

More to come in a couple of weeks

Patty & Rodger on board Presto!



Rudder plans to stow away on Presto! (We wish!)