

Presto! Letter No 3 from Warderick Wells, Easter Sunday.

On Saturday March 24th our friend Dean on Amazon came alongside with some magazines and a couple of books and some Bahamian currency which we traded for books, magazines and US \$'s. Then we motored over to Nixon's Harbor, in Key Biscayne, preparing for a dawn start to Cat Cay/Gun Cay in the Bahamas. Last time we were at Nixon's, it was a quiet anchorage with a few



cruising boats waiting to cross, not so this time, probably everybody from Miami who had a 25 – 30' speed boat each with at least 4 engines were anchored off the south side of the harbor which is very shallow. Somehow each boat had 2 speakers and the noise of rap music was deafening!! It went on until past sunset, not an easy place to get some rest before our crossing. It amazed us and other cruisers that we talked to that the obviously very wealthy owners of the mansions along the shore could not prevent this happening every week-end, what a nightmare it must be for them.

Dean getting ready for the "Swap"

By 02.30 the wind had eased and was finally blowing from the South West 10 – 15kts. Rodger pulled up the anchor and we motored out through the channel towards the open water, putting up the sails as we went. The Gulf Stream was running at about 3.5 kts, which we knew because we had one squall, that ended up with no wind and on the GPS we were moving at 3.5 knots northward while sitting dead in the water. The wind picked up again and we scooted along between 6 – 8 knots having a great sail, surfing at 10 knots into the cut between Cat Cay & Gun Cay, it was so nice to be in the light blue waters of the Bahamas again albeit a little windswept. 8 hours from Fowey Rocks, not bad.

We anchored off Little Cat Cay that night and the next day went back to Cat Cay to clear customs, because Cat Cay is a private island there was a \$100. fee, just to tie up there to clear, but if we liked it would be applied to our dockage, which turned out to be \$97.50. The customs agent was extremely nice and after a short delay while she went off to clear in a plane, we had our cruising permit, fishing license and clearance. We tied up to the dock, did laundry, showered and had a nice walk on the beach. We met up with a couple, Ron & Karen, whom we had previously met in Tarpon Basin, on Key Largo, they too were going to head down the west side of Andros, but we lost contact with them and think they may have turned north instead.



Cat Cay Harbor entrance and runway

We set out the next day heading for Williams & Billy Cays. Two small islands which are a third of the way down Andros' West coast. The sailing was good and we anchored just south of the islands. Next day it was blowing, again, so we moved closed to shore to get more lee and spend the day cleaning up and resting. Next day we sailed on and into a place called Wide Opening, a very shallow bay that has a fishing camp for Bone Fishermen at the end. Rodger wanted to get off the boat and take a picture, the water was only 2'9" deep, but the white Marl which gave the appearance of a sandy bottom, was almost up to his knees and very sticky, he wore shoes and knee length socks and once in, he could barely move, I had to use the push pole to get the boat over to him so he could extract his legs. Marl is a bit like thin cement and sticky!



Marl outfit!

Presto entering south Bight, Andros



That night we anchored close to the entrance to North Bight. Heading south the next day we made it to the entrance to the South Bight, which had a very shallow entrance but once inside the Bight, the water was 12' deep for quite a while. Turtles abounded and we saw herons and egrets. There

was a patch of shallow water, but *Presto!* came through with no trouble, we anchored in the Bight in flat calm water and had a very peaceful night. Having to wait for the light to improve before we could leave, as we had more shallow water to cross, we finally motored out of the Bight with and headed up the channel to Lisbon Creek on the east side of Mangrove Key in Andros. We anchored in the channel west of the Government dock.



Dolphins playing at the bow



Lisbon Creek

Not much of anything in Lisbon Creek, and a very nice gentleman called us a taxi and off we went with Harry of Harry's Taxi Co. to Little Harbor (Moxey Town) to get gas and ice, the bread had missed the mail boat, so no bread! Harry, Rodger & I stopped at the Mangrove Cay Inn and had Peas & Rice and Conch and fresh lemonade for lunch. This was the place we could buy ice. The taxi ride was going to be \$25 one way, but worked out to be \$30 Round trip. Such nice friendly people in the Bahamas, it makes it a special place.

Harry & his taxi

We had planned to spend a little more time in south Andros, but there was a chance of calm weather and we left to cross the Tongue of the Ocean for Green Cay, a small island right on the edge of the Grand Bahama Bank and the Tongue of the Ocean. Going from about 4000' lapping its western side to 2' on the east side. We anchored off a beach on the North side of Green Cay and walked ashore. No human foot prints anywhere except ours. The wind changed and we moved around to the West side to get more lee. Patrol Boat P-49, a Bahamas Defense Force boat also



anchored nearby. The next morning we were up early, and there came an odd noise from the shore. About 75 to 100 goats were walking along the rock, probably licking the salt. They certainly looked very healthy for a desert island.

Presto! in Green Cay



Luckily the day was flat calm and we motored all day to arrive at Staniel Cay. About 5 miles out the 290' private mega yacht "Cakewalk" along with a couple of other huge the Bahamas we knew from years ago! shopping in Staniel Cay (not much in the topped off with fuel and Ice. We also (Bahamas Telephone) and bought more use the phone as a wifi hotspot, on our sim card. So we called our friend



was anchored private yachts, not We did a little shops to shop for), went to Batelco minutes and data to prepaid Bahamian Melissa in Nassau and also Tony & Judy's Bahamian

number which was passed on to his partner George & Rosa also from Newport, on their boat *Lime'n*. At Staniel Cay big rays would swim under the boat and nurse sharks would pass by! Rodge saw one when he was checking on the anchor, glad I didn't see it.



Presto & Elvis in Staniel Cay, both from Newport, RI



Swimming Pigs! In love with the dinghy

From Staniel we went to

Big Majors Spot, where the swimming pigs live! What a trip, when you go in to the beach in the dinghy they come rushing out for treats, there were all sizes from piglets, too skinny to eat! and

larger ones, which have long hair and will swim out to greet you. Next we sailed off to Warderick Wells, in the Exuma National Park and luckily got a mooring in the North Mooring Field which gave us protection from the South and West wind which blew for a couple of days. We got to Warderick Wells just as a squall line was coming through and anchored close to Emerald Rock, and then waited for the tide to rise so we could cut through the dinghy pass, much to the consternation of the Park Warden. They don't want other yachts to see it used as they will try to enter, and go aground and have to be rescued.

Now it is strong out of the East and we will leave tomorrow for Hawksbill Cay just north of here. Warderick Wells has great walking trails all over and around the Island, we went up to Boo Boo Hill to see if we could find the *Presto!* driftwood sign we made last year, no luck. Took a dinghy ride and then walked past 18th century ruins to a long rock wall and over to the windward side.



Storm Clouds at Warderick Wells





Banana Quit a small cheeky visitor to Presto!

When we got hot we just took a swim in the crystal clear, waters! On Saturday evening, the park supplies the ice and the cruisers bring drinks and pot luck snacks ashore for Happy Hour. A great way to meet other cruising couples and we also met mutual friend

of Melissa's, Chris and Luanne, who are from Spanish Wells. We met Ian the Bahamas Defense Force officer who is stationed at Warderick Wells.

Today Easter Sunday we went ashore for a pot luck lunch, we contributed a rice salad from our meager supplies, all the attending yacht crews bought sides of either salads or deserts ashore and the Exuma Park staff provided baked ham and Turkey and delicious macaroni & cheese, served at the staff house overlooking the anchorages, what a nice day it was. I was a treat to taste food which I had not prepared or cooked and to add a little meat to our diet.

Happy Easter and until next time *Presto!* signing off.

Moored at Warderick Wells



Full moon rising at Warderick Wells