

Modern Day Pirates

Three of our members, Willis (Bill) Cline, Roger Doyle and Bill Mills, plus Roger's son-in-law David Kingsbury, recently pretended that they were modern day Caribbean Pirates and took a sailing trip on the 37 foot yacht Kokomo in the Bahamas. The following are the reports from Roger's GPS unit with the dates, coordinates and locale.

Nov 10/11 - 25.07566N -77.31683W - Nassau

Nov 12 - 24.71236N -76.82720W - Highborne Cay

Nov 13 - 24.71756N -76.83078W - Highborne Cay

Nov 14 - 24.53333N - 76.79667W - Shroud Cay

Nov 15 - 24.39723N - 76.63272W - Waderick Wells Cay

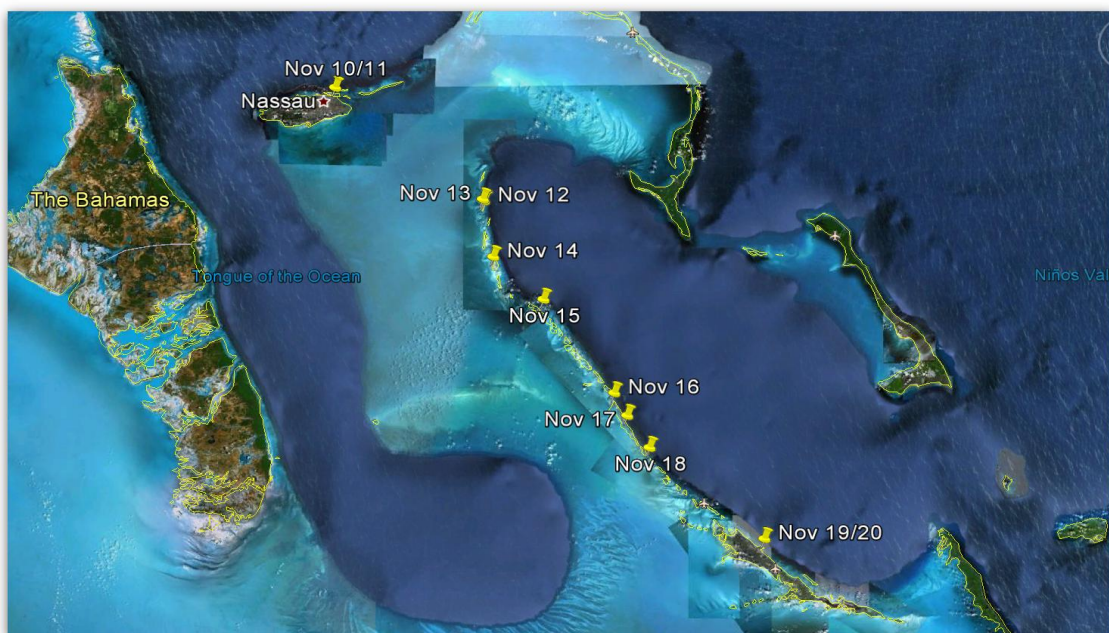
Nov 16 - 24.09833N - 76.40333W - Black Point Settlement

Nov 17 - 24.02610N - 76.36139W - Hetty's Land

Nov 18 - 23.92362N - 76.28909W - Big Galliot Cay

Nov 19/20 - 23.63015N - 75.91750W - Emerald Bay

This picture from Google Earth will give you some idea of the extent of their trip.



Here is Bill Mills' report on their adventure with a number of pictures.

Departing Victoria: Pulled away about 20 minutes late and just made it to VR at departure time



Starting Out

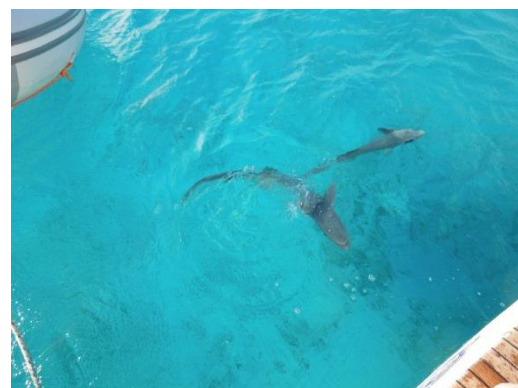
there; happily we had a two hour wait in Toronto – the concern was not having our baggage do the connections necessary. When we arrived in Nassau the luggage took one hour to appear but they all arrived in good order. Skip (Roger's son-in-law) was waiting patiently (I think) and we hired a taxi to the Nassau Yacht Haven and a 37 foot Beneteau Yacht called Kokomo.

On Board, Saturday: It has plenty of room for people but not very generous spaces for storing groceries. The three experienced sailors set off shopping while I remained behind sorting out the galley; they returned two hours later with enough food to feed several navies. Eric, the NavTours rep, spent a couple of hours going over all the particulars for the boat, desperately hoping we would bring it back in good order. Darkness fell by 6:00 pm, and we were all abed by 9:00. Sometime around 11:00 all hell broke loose; bombs going off, lights of every colour flashing, and Roger up on deck saying “Hey, you have to see

this”. There was a spectacular fireworks display in progress, as fine a show as any I've seen and it lasted at least 25 minutes. We could not determine what the occasion was, (the 10th of November??) and concluded it was a Saturday night display for all the passengers on the five cruise ships berthed



The Yacht Kokomo



Remora-like fish eating left over porridge

in Nassau harbour. This also explained the tourist craft going by advertising *good fishing or parasailing*.

The wind was blowing strongly on Sunday and the experts concluded we should delay our departure until the next day; instead we motored out the long bay to our starting point and then raised the jib by itself. We turned about and sailed all the way back past our harbour and on to Nassau harbour getting a good view of the cruise ships. Having had a satisfactory trial run we returned to our dock and retired for the day.

Sunday we departed at about 9:00 am, motoring to the start point as before and setting sail for Allen's Cay against a strong easterly wind. The jib was set (only 110 degrees) with a double reefed mainsail and we roared along between 6 and 7 knots. I have only sailed in the protected waters of Juan de Fuca and points north and was unprepared

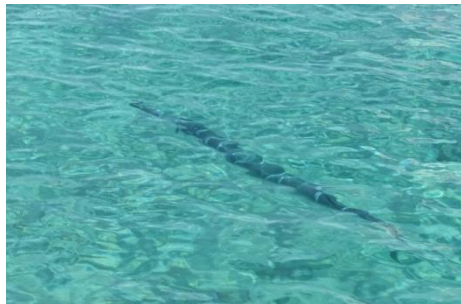
for the extreme list of a strong wind 40 degrees off the bow, expecting to be pitched over the side at any moment. The others, of course, were completely in tune with the motion.

On arrival at Highborne Cay, a few miles South of Allen's Cay, a discussion ensued on whether to anchor on the west side of the Cay or enter the harbour. We did motor into the marina harbour and dropped anchor only to be told we were on private property, but could hire a berth for the night. On discovering the cost would be over \$100, we immediately upped anchor and returned to the west side of Cay. It was only mid-afternoon so Roger and Willis put on snorkels and terrified the fishes near the shore. It gets dark here by 6:00 pm and we are in bed by 9:00; the others have a horrible habit of rising before 7:00 am, quite disturbing my slumber; whereas they each have a cabin, I am reduced to sleeping in the main cabin beside the dining table, and in the morning the boys boom about. (Actually I made a special request to sleep here.)



Large iguana admiring Willis' thumb

Next morning (Tuesday the 14th) we set sail for Allen's Cay where there is a lovely beach infested with vicious iguanas. Roger and Willis, armed with large carrots, went ashore and soon had a host of the beasts approaching them. Neither of the intrepid mariners succeeded in hand feeding them. It appeared the iguanas preferred fingers to carrots – but they ate the carrots thrown their way with the smaller ones racing about avoiding the bigger ones. The largest iguana was about four feet long and probably weighed 50 pounds (according to Willis, who exaggerates) and the smallest about a foot long. When back on the boat we read that it was forbidden, on penalty of death, to feed any wildlife on the islands. We then proceeded to our previous anchorage on Highborne for the night.



Needlefish

Next day we sailed to Shroud Cay, arriving about noon. The recommended excursion was to go to the north end of the island, enter a small river and follow it to a delightful blue lagoon, ideal for swimming and snorkeling. Willis, Roger, and I selected snorkel gear, piled into the dingy and set off. The dingy outboard motor ran very roughly; I was

in favour of returning to the boat, quite convinced that it would not last the whole trip, but was over-ruled by the

others. We rounded a point north of the anchorage and saw a river mouth with a pylon indicating a channel entry. We were soon in a narrow channel with the bottom clearly visible, with mangroves on both sides; we continued as best we could, but the river kept getting shallower; Willis at the helm and, on occasion, Roger and I hauling on lines pulling it over the shallows like Bogart in the African Queen. After two hours in the mangroves and trying a couple of side channels we never did find the mystical blue lagoon. On arrival back at the boat and closer examination of the map we saw that we were quite far from the actual river entry and, according to the guidebook, dingy travel in any of the other smaller rivers is verboten – ah well.

Thursday (Nov 15) we set out for Warderick Wells Cay, and arrived at about noon. This is the location of the Exuma Cays Land and Sea Park where we paid for a mooring and 24 hours of internet service. Once again Roger, Willis, and I set out in the dingy (Willis having discovered that only one of the two spark plugs was working, the other having no gap to speak of) which ran much better than yesterday. We went to the office, paid for the mooring and internet, and set off

on a walk along a recommended trail, eventually arriving at Barefoot Beach, where we took off our shoes and strolled into the water. The whole place is, of course, composed of coral and very uncomfortable to walk on – doing it without shoes would result in shredded feet. Rogers says it is the top of a coral ridge 6000 feet deep (or more) and 150 millions years old.

From Warderick Wells we sailed south-south-east to the small community of Black Point where we had our first on-shore meal and enjoyed free internet service. We walked to the DeShamon Restaurant at about 1:30 pm and enjoyed cheeseburgers and beer (I had ginger-ale) and the bill was only \$12.50 each which we thought very low. Although the place was empty, the waitress assured us the place was busy – but we only saw five or six people out and about. Perhaps siesta time; lord knows it is plenty hot. Speaking of food, our cooking arrangements consist of Willis cooking oatmeal for breakfast (7:30 am) and insisting we eat it; Roger, Skip, and I taking turns



Skip and Lifebuoy

doing the lunches and suppers, and myself making mid-morning and afternoon coffees if needed. Last evening I introduced the game of “Oh Hell”; none of the boys had even heard of the game; needless to say I ended up with the lowest score. Willis jumped off the stern rail to have a bath and then we all went to bed.



Roger and Willis struggling to land the dinghy

Saturday the 17th: We are well ahead of schedule and decided to back-track to Staniel Cay, where we can buy fuel for the dingy at the Staniel Cay Yacht Club. The closest route was though a narrow passage between the north end of the Great Guana Cay and Caukin Cay South taking us out into the open ocean; much rougher and sick-making. It was only a one-hour passage to an entry back into sheltered water at Staniel. We docked at the club, were directed to the fuelling dock, refueled the dingy, (3 gallons for \$20) then took the dingy to the Government dock, a mile further south, in search for coffee ashore. When we enquired at

the dock for a place to have coffee they directed us to the Staniel Cay Yacht Club. It was a pleasant 15 minute walk back to the club. They had no coffee but Roger and Skip had beer and Willis a glass of iced-tea (Ed: not sure what Mills had).

Leaving the Cay, we reversed course to return to the open ocean and sail south back to Black Point and then continue on to Farmer’s Cay or Cave Cay, but on seeing the large swells coming towards us at the entrance, decided to turn about and continue entirely in sheltered water. The Bahamas are still recovering from Hurricane Sandy; there seem to be few people about (I don’t think they blew away) but there are many roofs that seem to have lost shingles, and the government just passed a law allowing duty free imports of building materials and cars for a period of three months.

Willis and I took the dingy to the beach complete with snorkel gear; I jumped into the water (we anchored the dingy) and swam away towards the reef. A few small fishes of various colours were seen but no large fishes and very little vegetation. When I got close to the shoreline, I turned around and started back. Flipping eagerly with both legs and observing the bottom, I realized I wasn't moving at all. I had to get on my back and paddle like the devil to get back to the dingy; only to get heck from Willis for not staying with him. "You're always supposed to dive in pairs, don't you know"(Ed: what would we do without Willis to keep us on the straight and narrow). The hardest part for me was to struggle back into the dingy over the side; I eventually went to the back and climbed up over the engine.

Monday the 19th: The longest leg was now upon us as we wanted to arrive at Emerald Bay by the end of the day; we left at 8:40 am and had to go through a cut just south of us to get into the open ocean – the only route to our destination. Happily the wind was a little lighter than yesterday, blowing about 11 knots from the east. Actually it was a rather boring run of six-and-a-half hours. Arriving at the marina we stopped at the refueling dock where we were met by the Nav-Tours agent and directed to the permanent berth. We are not actually at George Town but eight miles north up the coast at a very lovely resort, complete with palm trees, heated pool, golf course, and fancy restaurant. You could easily imagine it was a set in a Hollywood movie; in addition to the pool there was an outdoor sauna, and 50 yards to the east, a sandy beach with thatched umbrellas shading benches, and eager employees dashing about with coconut drinks for all. (Then, in the movies of course, the sharks or other beastie would appear.) We pretty well finished our on-board food by Monday night and had determined to have breakfast and lunch on Tuesday and eat in the restaurant for dinner. The marina was very nice, individual washrooms with sink, toilet, and showers which allowed us to clean up in style. We had an extremely fine meal – mine was lobster tails followed by Key Lime pie; the bill was \$50 US, the most I have ever paid for a meal.



End of trip - same size crew

Tuesday afternoon the Nav-Tours rep came aboard and checked out the boat to see we didn't make off with a towel or an anchor and he obliged us by taking an *after* picture of the fearless sailors four.

Now for our next adventure.....