

## SV. Amarula sails from Dar es Salaam to Knysna

### WEEK ONE

#### Day 1 – Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2009

With our initial departure date set for around 15<sup>th</sup> October, we finally slipped our mooring at NYC at 1635 on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Having waited almost 3 weeks for our gas bottle to be filled, Eric took the shop assistant hostage in an attempt to recover said item. This worked and with another round of farewells on the Quarter deck we took our leave in the late afternoon and decided to head to Sinda for the night. Just as we sailed out of Msasani Bay we passed George on Kusi returning to the club after an overnigher at Sinda! Two hours later we anchored at Sinda and enjoyed a peaceful night's sleep, knowing that we were finally on our way.

#### Day 2 – Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2009

We had a relaxing start to the day with yoga on the back deck followed by a swim and a walk on the beach. Eric negotiated a good price for some crab and lobsters with the fishermen on the beach, so we had a seafood salad for lunch later as we sailed towards Mafia Island. As there was not much wind we motored from 0855 until 1000, then motor-sailed until around 1300 when we had a great sail past Ras Kutani and Amani beach right through until we anchored off Boydu Island just south of Mafia at 2200. Just on sunset we saw at least 4 whales breaching – not a bad way to enjoy our sundowners!

#### Day 3 – Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2009

Unfortunately our anchorage at Boydu was unpleasant as the wind came up, so we set sail at 0540 in choppy seas. At 0730 Lynne's sleep was interrupted with a shout from Eric to come on deck and find out what the problem was with a boatload of local fishermen who were waving at us for assistance. It turned out that they had engine problems, but we noticed they had a sail rolled up, so they could get themselves to safety. We filled a large water bottle for them and made a care package of bread, Blue Band and peach jam, which we hoisted across to them. The smiles that broke out on their faces made it all worthwhile, despite the fact that at the same time we caught a kingfish and got our 2 fishing lines tangled up due to all the commotion! Soon after this drama we got a fish trap caught around the port propeller, so we decided to anchor off Mchangi reef to fix it and take the dogs onto the sandbank to play Frisbee. We had lunch at the anchorage and proceeded towards Kilwa, where we anchored in Rukyira Bay at 1835. Friends were staying at Kilwa Dreams lodge, but we decided to meet up in the morning rather than attempt to find the lodge and our friends in the dark and without knowing the area. We enjoyed a delicious feast of lobster thermidore with a bottle of white wine.

#### Day 4 – Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2009

After another restless night we were up early and at around 0830 we dinghied ashore to find Hannah and Woody. We were amazed to find Woody out of bed before 0900, however he wasn't totally compus mentis (so nothing new there then!) We had coffee and met his parents and friends, then they had to leave for the drive back to Dar, so we returned to the boat for a relaxing day in Rukyira Bay. We moved to a better anchorage across the bay much closer to the reef and we took the dogs ashore for a walk. On the way we spotted a lone Greater Flamingo enjoying the water and managed to get a few good photos. On the beach by the lighthouse there was a lone mangrove tree, which was home to at least 30 nesting herons with chicks. We returned to the boat and had a relaxing afternoon reading in the hammocks. What a life!

#### Day 5 – Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> October, 2009

After a wonderful sleep at our peaceful anchorage we were up early again and motored round to anchor off Kilwa Kisiwani. On our previous visits to Kilwa we visited the main ruins and the Great Mosque but never got across the island to see the Husuni Kubwa ruins, so we anchored just in front of them this time and kayaked ashore through the mangroves to pay them a visit. The ruins are fantastic and date back to the early 1300's. With the aid of the guide book we could identify the total layout & attempt to visualize how imposing & important this palace must have been during that period in history when Kilwa held such power over regional trade.

On returning to the boat we could see that the dogs would never forgive us if we didn't take them for their daily walk, so we kayaked further round the island and wandered through the mangroves with them before setting sail just after lunch. En route towards Mtwara we caught a barracuda and a yellow fin tuna. Lynne was delighted as that meant sushi for supper! Despite a good wind for sailing we anchored at Mzungu Bay at 1850 for a miserable night at anchor.

#### Day 6 – Monday 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2009

By daybreak we agreed that we should have kept on sailing to a better, more protected anchorage. Unfortunately the wind we had enjoyed the night before had dropped off and moved round more to the south east, which meant motoring all the way to Lindi where we decided to anchor for a beach walk and some relaxation. En route we caught and lost a barracuda, we reset the lure & were rewarded when we landed a 10 Kg wahoo. Whilst on the beach at Lindi we looked across to the boat to see whales passing and heading out to sea, then 10 minutes later they turned round and headed back into the bay.

Unfortunately they were just too far away to get good photos.

By 1830 we had anchored in the port in Mtwara. The anchorage was comfortable so we hoped to have a good sleep ready for the departure procedures next morning, however the mosquitoes made a meal of us throughout the night!

Mtwara is a pretty port. There are also options to anchor in the bay north at Mikandani where the old German Boma has been restored as a hotel. This is also a pretty bay with nice beach walks and Baobab trees. Taxis are available to go into Mtwara.

Mtwara is a Tanzanian port of entry and exit. We have chosen to exit from Mtwara on our past 3 voyages south and have found the officials friendly and efficient.

Sailors visiting Mtwara & environs should be aware that the digitized Admiralty Charts as shown on both Cmap & Maxsea give inaccurate readings by approx 0.6Nm. The charts are very detailed & one needs to be aware that the GPS position & chart longitude do not relate. Navigators need to revert to first principles ie. Navigate relative to the chart & not GPS, then all is fine. We have experienced this GPS/Chart inaccuracy on numerous occasions. It is always the longitude that is out, a chart for north Madagascar is almost 3 miles out in some areas.

#### Day 7 – Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> October, 2009

Eric was up early on a mission to rid the boat of mosquitoes and sprayed every nook and cranny, forcing Lynne to get up too and out on deck for fresh air! Then off he went to get provisions, fuel and visit the customs and immigration officers. By 1130 we were cleared out, had fresh fruit and vegetables from the market and 2 lots of fuel onboard. The customs officer insisted on coming onboard, probably more out of curiosity than anything else, then we dropped him back at the port and after another sushi lunch we departed for Mnazi Bay 30 Nm south of Mtwara, just before the Mozambique border. By the south horn of the reef out of Mtwara we had another special experience with 3 adult whales on our port side for approx 25 minutes before moving on. Mnazi bay is a beautiful place and a calm anchorage to spend a day or so getting everything ready for the next leg of the trip. The beach at Ruvula, (on the south side close to the Artumus Gas well) is stunning with soft squeaky sand, which makes running for the Frisbee quite a

challenge for the dogs. Mnazi Bay is on the same electronic chart as Mtwara, & though very detailed, the GPS positions indicate the same inaccuracies as Mtwara.

## WEEK TWO

### Day 8 – Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2009

We set aside a day in Mnazi Bay to make a few repairs to the fore sail, service the furlers and dive gear, plus some cleaning. We enjoyed a walk on the beach early in the morning and later explored another of the islands in the bay just before sunset. This island is across the bay to the north of the ruins of the eccentric Latham Leslie Moore's house (worth a visit if the opportunity arises – see our [Captain's Log 2008 January to June](#)) A group of wazungu (foreigners) had also arrived at the island and set up camp, only to find themselves the centre of entertainment for the surprisingly large village community who came out in force and camped on the beach to watch their every movement! We became bonus entertainment with the dogs and their antics with the Frisbees. The beach on the south of this island has a fantastic stand of over 20 Baobab trees & reminds us of a similar but much larger setting of Baobabs at Moramba Bay in Madagascar.

### Day 9 – Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> October, 2009

At 0630 we set sail from Mnazi Bay en route to Mozambique. Once again the wind was on the nose so we had to motor for the first few hours until we reached Cabo Delgado, at which point we managed to fly the spinnaker for another few hours. We spotted whales again off our port quarter and enjoyed their company for about an hour as we all headed south. The wind was fairly light but at least it was in the right direction, however once we passed Tecomagi and Rongui islands in the Quirimbas, we motor sailed the final 7 miles to anchor off Vamizi for the night. Our old computer with the routes marked on to our previous anchorage had died so we had to find the way again through the large reef at the north eastern end of the island well away from the lodge! We anchored and quickly launched the dinghy for the ritual walk onshore with the dogs and just made it back to the boat for sundowners (our ritual!). Another fish supper, this time lightly fried in butter, with wine and cream, then laid on a bed of garlic spinach.

### Day 10 – Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2009

As it was low tide in the morning we decided to walk the dogs and wait for high tide before moving from our anchorage. So the morning was spent with Eric sorting out and servicing the dive gear and Lynne making fish cakes and doing some other routine chores. Before lunch Lynne went for a shallow dive under the boat to test her gear whilst Eric had the more mundane task of scraping the barnacles off the bottom of the keels. After lunch we set sail and had a really pleasant sail under spinnaker until we almost reached our intended anchorage off Niuni sandbank after dark, at which point we attempted to sock the spinnaker. Unfortunately the sock had got caught up at the top of the sail and we had a chaotic half hour attempting to drop the spinnaker without the wind catching it – impossible! As the sail hit the water the spinnaker pole took the full force of the sail and snapped right off the fore beam. Luckily it was still attached so we managed to retrieve it, but meanwhile we had to drop the spinnaker into the water along the starboard side of the boat (ensuring the ropes didn't wrap around the propeller) then hoist the sail onto the starboard bow over the handrail. Quite a drama! We finally got everything under control and managed to anchor for the night.

### Day 11 – Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2009

Since arriving in Mozambique, our clocks have gone back 1 hour from Tanzania, so this means the sun is up along this coast before 5am and it sets by 5pm! Consequently our days are starting very early. This morning we kayaked ashore to the sandbank where we walked the dogs, played Frisbee, had a swim and Lynne did her yoga salute to the sun

routine – all before 7am! Then it was time to head into Mocimboa da Praia to officially enter the country and get port clearances to sail down the coast. Lynne was elected this job and Eric dinghied her ashore where she found the Port offices just up from the beach. Two very casually dressed officials attended to our requirements and stamped the necessary papers all in a matter of minutes without any hassle at all. The only request made was for Lynne's NYC polo shirt, which of course she preferred to keep herself whilst walking around the town! Next was immigration. The building was behind the port complex and Lynne entered the main door only to find that it appeared to be the immigration official's residence and she had woken him up! He gruffly waved her outside and within minutes appeared (dressed) and unlocked a door off to the side of the veranda. The procedure then went smoothly with very little being said, other than Lynne uttering 'obrigada' (thank you) every now and then and the passing of papers, passports and eventually the required US dollars for the visas. In Dar es Salaam the Mozambique Embassy was asking \$45 each for visas and it took 5 days. Earlier in the year when Eric had been to Mozambique to look at the Zambezi project, he had been given a visa on entry for only \$25. Here in Mocimboa da Praia, Lynne was asked for \$70 - the cost being - \$25 per visa, \$3 each for port clearance and \$10 for the boat. No worries..... With that all taken care of, the next thing was to find a bank – Thank goodness for ATM's in even the smallest of places these days – and a shop selling local SIM cards for our phones and internet connection. That done, it was simply a case of radioing Eric for a ride back to the boat and we were on our way again. We decided to anchor just outside the town area to enable us to set up the mobile phones and internet and then collected emails and checked the internet before heading across to Mechanga Island to anchor for the night.

#### Day 12 – Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2009

As Mechanga Island was home to a fairly large fishing community, we decided to sail south to find a quieter place to stop for the dogs' beach time. We had a good sail and passed a huge sand bank (Varuni), which we had to tack around to get past. It was tempting to stop and go ashore with the dogs, but the sailing was going well so we decided to get a bit further south whilst we had good winds. We chose Quissanga as our dog walking island, a small island next to Medjumbe, (which has another upmarket lodge on it). Quissanga was a lovely island and we enjoyed our swim, walk and Frisbee, but we were happy to move on from the rather choppy anchorage. We sailed on until we reached Macaloe where we decided to anchor for the night.

#### Day 13 – Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2009

Before heading off we had a walk on Macaloe and looked at the ruins of the fort. The island has been made into a conservation area so no-one was living there, however within half an hour of us arriving, a number of boatloads of people from the mainland stepped ashore for whatever daily activities they had planned. We set sail and decided to stop for another dog walk at Mogundula, which was fairly small but had a lovely sand spit for playing Frisbee on. In the East Africa Pilot, Delwyn McPhun recommends the snorkeling at Zala Bank, so we thought we'd check it out, as the conditions when we came through here 2 years ago were way too choppy, however all we found was dead coral with small sections of regrowth and we wondered if this area had been badly affected by the El Nino 10 years or so ago – we later met some people who had snorkeled here and found wonderful coral, so we must have picked a bad spot.... After that we stopped at yet another small island, Ilha das Rolas, with another sand spit. There were a number of fishermen on the island, so Eric went to check out what they had caught and came back with a big bucket of whitebait, which we fried up for lunch. Delicious! We had enough for at least 5 more meals, so scraped round to find small areas of freezer space to store them for a later date. The wind had picked up nicely by this time, so we decided to get as far south as possible by dark. We sailed past Matemo, Ibo and Quilalea islands, all

of which have lodges and decided to stop over at Quipaco for the night, as we know the people who run the small lodge at Sito just opposite here.

#### Day 14 – Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2009

We kayaked ashore to the lodge on Sito in the morning to say hello. We had already made contact with Craig and Tessa and discovered that they were away on holiday but we went ashore anyway to have a coffee with Gareth, who is running the place in their absence – amazingly we bumped into Tessa in East London on December 8<sup>th</sup> as we were en route to Knysna and she was heading back to Sito that evening! At around 1030 we sailed on to Pemba and made it there by 1400, so Eric was able to go ashore to get fuel at high tide. As we had internet contact we checked emails and weather conditions for the next 5 days of our passage.

#### WEEK THREE

#### Day 15 – Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

After the first rains in over a week it was another early start as Lynne aired and washed the bedding, which could be hung out on the freshly washed rails! Eric worked on repairing the small rips in the spinnaker after our excitement the other night, then Eric took the dogs on the beach for a play whilst Lynne went to the market to do the provisioning for the next leg of the trip. As there had been no rain for many months the prices were very high. Despite the limited choice we did rather well and now have a large stock of cabbage, carrots, green beans, eggplant, green peppers, tomatoes, bananas, pineapples, mangoes and some very squashed papayas! In the afternoon we continued our sail south. It was pretty choppy with the wind from the south and current running with us to produce short steep waves, so we decided to call it a night and anchored in the large bay near the Lurio River, which enabled us to get a good night's rest before moving on.

#### Day 16 – Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

Another early rise and we were on our way by 0540 with more choppy seas. We finally anchored in Memba Bay at around 1400 hours. This was one of our favourite spots from our Mozambique trip 2 years ago. It's a huge bay with deep inlets and coral walls, which were easily visible in the crystal clear water even from the deck of the boat. We did some boat maintenance jobs once we anchored then went ashore just before sunset and had a walk through the bush and baobabs across to another of the deserted beaches.

#### Day 17 – Friday 6<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

Next morning we finished off the spinnaker repairs and Eric had the task of repairing the port engine and also the watermaker. The high pressure pump stopped working yesterday, so he spent the morning attempting to sort out the problem only to find that the pump repair job in Dar hadn't been done properly so he wasn't able to resolve it. Meanwhile Lynne kayaked through the mangroves and back to the beach with the dogs. After a frustrating morning achieving very little, Lynne persuaded Eric to take time out and go for a dive, so we enjoyed the fantastic coral wall just by the anchorage. Whilst there were very few fish the variety of corals was spectacular. It has to be one of our favourite dive spots in the region. Unfortunately the watermaker wasn't fixed, so we now have to be very careful with water. Luckily we had bought 3 x 12 litre bottles of drinking water from Dar, which is just as well because the water we had been making had become brackish and unpleasant for drinking.

After our dive we decided to take the wind and sail south, however it was quite a trek just getting out of the bay before we could point in the right direction and by early evening the wind had backed off, so we anchored just inside the bay near Nacala close to the lighthouse for the night.

#### Day 18 – Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

Once again we set off at daybreak to sail as far south as we could. We had to motor most of the morning, but by midday the wind picked up and we were able to sail. Whilst sailing past Ilha Mozambique we enjoyed a brief window of internet access. This part of the coast was new territory for us. 2 years ago we sailed as far south as here before heading across to Madagascar. We were pleasantly surprised by the pretty coastline which was dotted with numerous islands and reefs and long stretches of white sandy beaches. Consequently navigation was a challenge particularly after dark, but we continued with the wind until after midnight by which time the wind backed off again and the mainsail started to flog, so we dropped it and motored for another couple of hours to arrive at Ilha Mafamede just outside of the entrance to Angoche.

#### Day 19 – Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

We contemplated going to visit Angoche, but decided against it, as we had at least a 10 mile round trip to get there, so Eric took the dogs to play on the beach whilst Lynne did yoga then prepared breakfast. We relaxed and read for a couple of hours before setting off at around 10 am. We motored towards Pebane. From midday onwards we had a fantastic sail with speeds up to 10 knots. At around 1930 hours we anchored off Ilha Casuarina.

#### Day 20 – Monday 9<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

In the morning we took the dogs on Ilha Casuarina and were hoping to find a place to snorkel in the lagoon there, but the weather was overcast and there was no visibility. Shame, as yesterday it had been crystal clear at our anchorage, but it was only sand. We had also read about a wreck on Ilha Silva that we might try to snorkel or dive on, but again, the conditions were too choppy, so we had to abort that idea too. Our next plan had been to head for either Pebane or Quelimane and possibly even take a detour into the Zambezi delta, however as we started sailing it was evident that a better plan would be to use the wind and current and head south-west across the Beira Bight down to the Bazaruto Archipelago. So the next part of our passage took from 1100 hours on Monday morning until 2020 on Wednesday evening.

We began with both wind and current assisting us and were racing along at up to and beyond 11 knots well into Monday evening. During the night the wind died off but we still made good progress as the current stayed with us.

#### Day 21 – Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

By the early hours of Tuesday morning the conditions had changed, the sea had become choppy and confused slowing our progress and making for a much less comfortable sail. This carried on through most of Tuesday, however in the afternoon the conditions improved and we were once again sailing at 7 to 8 knots until late evening. By midnight the wind died off again and we had to drop the mainsail as it was flogging.

### WEEK FOUR

#### Day 22 – Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

Right through the night and into Wednesday morning there was almost no wind and it was right behind us, so we set both headsails and cruised slowly but comfortably towards our destination. Our expectations of a midday arrival were dashed as the wind didn't pick up for most of the day and the current was against us too. By mid-afternoon we decided to motor for a while as any wind we had was sending us in the wrong direction anyway, but by around 1700 hours we were able to fly the spinnaker again and finally arrived in the dark off Bazaruto island. We followed C-Map into a safe anchorage and had dinner and went to bed!

#### Day 23 – Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

We attempted to move to the southern part of Bazaruto island in the morning but it got quite shallow so we moved across and anchored at Ilha Santa Carolina. There we went for a walk on the beach and were approached by Marine Park Officials advising us that we can't have the dogs ashore and asking for our marine park fees, so we paid our 200Mets each and took the dogs back to the boat – shame, as they'd only had ½ an hour's play after their long sail. Back onboard we got to work on some of the boat jobs- fixing the starboard engine, changing the bulbs in the spreader lights etc and some washing. Later in the day a boat came by and asked us to move as they were filming 'Survivor' on the island. However they didn't come until 4.45pm and it was just before sunset, the tide was on its way out and Eric was half way up the mast! Consequently we stayed put and watched all the lights and action and a helicopter flying around until after dark. We had our sundowners on the deck then went off to bed and left them to survive....

#### Day 24 – Friday 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

At around 6am we were again asked to move whilst they were filming, so we weighed anchor and proceeded towards Bazaruto Island (Indigo Bay), We had to anchor off the island and wait for the tide. Another yacht , Alero (Canadian couple) also moved across and anchored by us and we discussed the situation with them and we both decided to head south towards Inhambane. Bazaruto Island looked as if it would be worth exploring for a few days, but we decided to move on for the dogs sake! We had good winds for sailing to Inhambane so we went with them.

#### Day 25 – Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

We arrived early at the bar entrance to Inhambane, so we had to wait for the high tide at a roly anchorage near the fairway buoy location, but we entered without too much difficulty around midday. It was quite a long sail round the point to Linga Linga where we had decided to anchor. When we arrived there we saw 'Catalyst' anchored up and they called us on the radio to get together at the lodge later that day to watch the rugby and have a beer. It was a windy day, not quite the tropical weather we've been used to, but we walked the dogs round the point near the lodge and played Frisbee with them before returning them to the boat and going ashore for the rugby (England beat Argentina!) and drinks at the lodge. The hospitality there was wonderful and we were invited for a Braai by the owners, Ronnie & Phil. There was a large group of people and we had a fun, sociable evening after days of being on our own.

#### Day 26 – Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

In the morning we went ashore near the wreck at Linga Linga. Eric collected oysters whilst Lynne played with the dogs, then we ventured further upriver to visit Emile & Betsy, a couple we had met the night before, who were building a lodge there. What a stunning location with coconut palms everywhere. Whilst we were there Ronnie & Phil from Linga Linga Lodge stopped by on their way to South Africa, so we said goodbye to them and we went back to the boat for lunch. Later on the rain came. Eric went ashore to watch rugby and Lynne stayed onboard, washed down the boat and collected rain water in our tanks before making spaghetti with bacon & oysters in wine cream sauce. Yum!

#### Day 27 – Monday 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

What a cold, wet, windy day! We had planned to go into the mangroves further upriver but decided against it. Later on Emile & Betsy invited all the yachties and their other neighbours for a delicious supper of oxtail and roast lamb. What a treat – we were totally spoiled during our stay at Linga Linga.

#### Day 28 – Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

After a terrible roly night at anchor off Linga Linga we decided against going into Inhambane as originally planned, as we wanted to ensure the boat was secure. The wind against the tide conditions were so bad last night that we couldn't get the dinghy up and even the dogs ended up sleeping inside rather than in their usual place in the cockpit. After walking the dogs on the beach we decided to move further upriver to find a better anchorage. It was a world of difference where we anchored off Emile and Betsy's place, so 'Catalyst' also joined us at this calm, peaceful anchorage. We all had sundowners onshore with Emile and Betsy with stunning views across the river as the sun set through the palm trees.

#### WEEK FIVE

#### Day 29 – Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

After a wonderful night's sleep we got up early and kayaked into the mangroves with the dogs to enjoy the splendid birdlife before heading into Inhambane to explore the town with Denise and Jean-Louis from 'Alero'. We were impressed with the cleanliness of the town and its well-stocked market. After stopping off for a coffee we wandered round to visit the old and new churches, the small museum and the waterfront promenade with its colourful red flame trees and rich green mangroves against the back drop of the glistening blue water and yellow sand beach. We had a tasty lunch at a street café before heading back to Linga Linga in the early afternoon. The dogs had a great day being completely spoiled by Emile and Betsy and their staff whilst we were in town and given the chance I think they would have happily jumped ship and stayed for life with their new found friends! We all had sundowners ashore again, then Emile and Betsy joined us onboard for supper, which was a new experience for them as they hadn't been onboard a yacht before. We said our farewells and had an early night as we planned to take the weather window the next morning and head to Maputo.

#### Day 30 – Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

By 0400 we were up and weighing anchor to ensure we made it across the bar by high tide. The conditions were reasonable, however the winds from the north made it difficult for us to enjoy any diving in the area, which we had hoped to do. We anchored off Barra point for breakfast and decided against risking a dive in case we dragged anchor or were carried too far from the boat to swim back. It was disappointing but that's life, so at 1015 we continued on our sail south and had a miserable sail with steep waves, choppy seas and rain throughout the night (which of course we couldn't collect whilst on passage!). The dogs eyed us mournfully and rarely left our sides throughout the trip.

#### Day 31 – Friday 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

The sail continued in much the same way throughout Friday with winds up to 35 knots from ESE and we knew we were now well out of the calm, tropical waters we have been used to for the past 7 years since returning to Tanzania in 2002. We couldn't even feed the dogs in the cockpit as a wave swept across the deck as we laid down their bowls! Everything outside got drenched and we were very grateful for our cosy enclosed wheelhouse to navigate from! As we crossed Maputo Bay we felt something wrap around the starboard propellor, so we had to switch to one engine and later discovered a thick 50mm rope streaming from the starboard prop.

#### Day 32 – Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2009

By 0330 we finally anchored off Ilha dos Portugueses across the bay from Maputo and got some sleep. We got up at 0800 and had a leisurely breakfast whilst waiting for the tide to go out so we could walk the dogs before heading across to Maputo in the afternoon to enter the marina and meet up with our friends. Just as we were planning to

launch the dinghy to go ashore masses of people descended on the island and boats came from everywhere. We looked out to see a huge 2,000 passenger cruise ship anchored about a mile away from us! We discovered that this ship MSC Sinfonia picks up in Durban on a Friday, lands its passengers on Ilha dos Portugueses (supposedly a semi-tropical island, which on this particular day was cold, wet, grey and windswept!) for a day of beach activities, then proceeds to Maputo for the Sunday and back to Durban by midday Monday! So our quiet beach walk turned into quite a circus with many new people for the dogs to meet and greet. After lunch we motor-sailed across the bay to Maputo marina to enter at high tide as it dries out at low tide. We finally managed to get in and negotiate the mud banks to enter our first marina berth since we left Yamba in April 2002! Our friends, Peter & Bessie were already on the dock waiting for us, so after a quick welcome onboard drink, we all went out to a lovely Thai restaurant for dinner.

#### Day 33 – Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

The next morning we walked the dogs along the ‘Marginal’ – the promenade near the marina, then Peter & Bessie collected us for a driving tour of Maputo. We passed the fort, the port and the railway station (which was used in the filming of ‘Blood Diamond’) then we drove out along the waterfront past Club Navale and out to Costa da Sol. We picked up some groceries, had lunch at the marina restaurant, which was very pleasant, then Peter & Bessie had to leave. We spent the afternoon doing some cleaning and boat maintenance and later met up with an ex-Dar friend At, who is working on a short term contract in Maputo. We enjoyed sundowners and supper onboard whilst reminiscing about old times in Dar!

#### Day 34 – Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2009

Most of Eric’s morning was taken up with customs and immigration procedures, whilst Lynne did the washing and aired the bedding after a number of days of rain. The dogs played at the marina with their new friend Derek (Jack Russell/ Maltese Poodle mix). Later in the afternoon Peter & Bessie collected us and took us to their home for a delicious supper of rack of lamb and [picanha](#) washed down with plenty of red wine – a great evening with great food and great company. Also a superb location as their house, in the grounds of the Hotel Polana, overlooks Maputo bay.

#### Day 35 – Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

On today’s walk we took Derek along with us, which was quite a novelty for him! Then we showered and walked to Maputo Shopping Centre for a light lunch and then into town to buy some fresh fruit and vegetables at the market. It was a lovely market with a large selection including stone fruit, which we hadn’t managed to get until here. In the evening we again went out for dinner to Costa Da Sol, which is famous for its prawns, with Peter & Bessie and their friends Peter & Vanessa, plus At.

### WEEK SIX

#### Day 36 – Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

Today was a boat day. Apart from the daily walk with the dogs and Derek, who then came onboard to play with our 2, we cleaned and tidied up the whole day. We had a quiet evening and watched ‘Blood Diamond’ seeing as we were in Maputo where much of it was filmed. We felt that the violence was overdone, otherwise it wasn’t a bad movie.

#### Day 37 – Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

More dog walking, cleaning, maintenance, re-provisioning and re-fuelling today, plus we filled our water tanks, as we don’t know when we will next be in a marina to do this! Later we had Peter, Bessie & At onboard for sundowners and supper – another very pleasant evening.

#### Day 38 – Friday 27<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

Today's challenge was to get out of the marina at high tide. We said our goodbyes to Peter, Bessie & At, then we began our attempt to depart Maputo marina at about 1 hour before high tide and dragged on the bottom, but gradually made our way out with the assistance of a power boat who towed us part of the way! The weather clouded over after a generally sunny week in the marina and the drizzle set in for the motor-sail across the bay back to the anchorage off Ilha dos Portugueses.

#### Day 39 – Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

We left our anchorage early and went to anchor off Ilha Inhaca to enjoy a final Mozambique beach walk with the dogs before heading to Richard's Bay. The beach on the northern tip of Inhaca was bordered by picturesque mangroves, sanddunes and rivulets and was completely deserted. After an hour or so we decided to say our goodbyes to Mozambique and at 0945 we set sail to South Africa. As there was very little wind we hoisted our large spinnaker and had a wonderful relaxing sail right into the night when the wind dropped so we had to motor for a while.

#### Day 40 – Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

We continued motor-sailing until around midday when we were able to sail again and fortunately we caught a dorado and a wahoo to re-stock our freezer, plus we saw plenty of dolphins and whales on the passage – wonderful! We arrived in Richard's Bay around 1530 and had tied up at Tuzi Gazi marina by 1640, as there was no room at the International wall. Being alongside wasn't great fun, particularly for the dogs with the wind and rain blowing into the cockpit! Also the hustle and bustle of Tuzi Gazi after our many years of anchoring in almost deserted anchorages was a big shock to the system. We soon met our neighbour, Anthea (and her cat!) and became good friends during the short time we were in Richard's Bay. She was kind enough to ferry us to and from the shopping centre and help us get sim cards and internet sorted out.

#### Day 41 – Monday 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2009

We spent most of the day completing the entry procedures with visits from customs, immigration, port health and police. There was no problem with bringing the dogs in but we discovered that Eric's Yellow Fever shots had expired just the day before we entered! Luckily he didn't have to go into quarantine and all clearances had been completed by mid-afternoon, so Anthea took Lynne to the shopping centre to get some provisions. In the evening we decided to eat out at Dros, one of the restaurants at Tuzi Gazi. Whilst the food was 'Family restaurant' style and pleasant enough, we were very impressed with the service and the dogs were even more impressed with the doggy bags we brought back for them later!

#### Day 42 – Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2009

After 2 nights alongside at Tuzi Gazi we decided to move around to the Zululand Yacht Club anchorage, as this would enable the boat to face into the wind and allow the dogs a more comfortable sleep in the cockpit, plus there were good beaches to kayak to from there. As we were about to drop the anchor 2 heads emerged from the water – there were hippos in the anchorage! The dogs went ballistic – this was even more exciting than whales and dolphins on the passage! Apparently there are also crocs in the area but fortunately we didn't see any. We had a very warm welcome from ZYC and enjoyed 4 days there whilst waiting for the next weather window to continue south.

#### WEEK SEVEN

#### Day 43 – Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2009

Our friends, Sue & Vaughan on 'Catalyst' who we met at Linga Linga, are members of ZYC and today they were at their boat cleaning and organizing after their 6 month trip, so in the morning Sue kindly took us to the shopping centre to do a big shop. Later we explored more of the nearby beaches with the dogs and in the evening we went along to the club Happy Hour, where we were presented with a welcome bottle of bubbly (a very civilised ZYC tradition for international visiting yachts!) We duly drank it along with the commodore, Kerstin and the manager, Charles.

#### Day 44 – Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2009

Back to the shopping centre today to source a few winter clothes as our wardrobes from our 7 years in the tropics are painfully inadequate to deal with this climate and they tell us it's summer here! However we are also being told that the weather is definitely not normal!

#### Day 45 – Friday 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2009

Once again a cold, wet and windy (unseasonal) day! We lodged our 'flight plan' (passage plan) with the police in the morning then Eric took fuel after which he enjoyed a braai lunch and plenty of beers with Kerstin and friends, whilst Lynne walked the dogs and did a final shop with Anthea. We said our goodbyes and made preparations to depart in the morning for East London.

#### Day 46 – Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2009

After a walk and Frisbee time on the beach we set sail at 1000 to East London. Although it was quite choppy at times we had plenty of current with us and at times were cruising at 11.5 knots with only the headsail. It wasn't the dogs' favourite passage and once again they stuck very close to us pleading with us for it to be over very soon! Late in the afternoon Eric was on watch and noticed some movement near the radar only to find a 'green tree snake' peering out at him! After a few attempts at catching it he thought he had trapped it in a locker, however the next morning this creature which turned out not to be a harmless tree snake but a deadly Boomslang was once again looking across at him from the wheelhouse bunk! How on earth it got onboard and past the dogs is a mystery....

#### Day 47 – Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> December, 2009

Today's sail was much more comfortable running downwind with the 2 headasails out. We saw whales again and had a tasty gammon lunch. The seas became choppy and unpleasant again later in the day and through the night and we were happy to reach East London by 0800 the following morning.

#### Day 48 – Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2009

Entering the river was interesting as visibility was very poor with fog, wind and rain. When we walked along the seafront a couple of days later it was hard to believe we hadn't actually been able to see anything of the coastline on entering the river. After a few attempts at anchoring in the river near the Buffalo River Yacht Club we manage to set the anchor and held fast for the next few days. We were checked in by Harry, the local policeman, who also confirmed that our stowaway snake was in fact a Boomslang and he took it away to release into the bush. The weather remained miserable for the rest of the day so we put on our warmest clothes and stayed onboard.

#### Day 49 – Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2009

We were surprised by a radio call from our friend, Tessa who we had met in Dar some years earlier and was now running the lodge at Sito that we visited on our cruise down the coast. Unbeknownst to us she is from East London and had seen us anchored in the river the day before. She called us to catch up for coffee and took us to the shops before

she had to depart for her flight back to join Craig in Mozambique at their lodge at Sito! It was great to catch up with her and an amazing coincidence that both she and us just happened to be in East London at the same time. Soon after we said goodbye to Tessa, our friends, Trish & Fitz arrived to join us from Knysna. These are the friends we have been on our way to visit since leaving Dar. Their arrival signaled PARTYTIME! Out came the lovely bottle of champagne we had been given in Dar by our good friend Pippa for a special occasion and it was all downhill from there..... We had a years catching up to do, then we went ashore to meet some of the people at the Yacht Club and more wine – oh dear. All too much for Lynne who very carefully walked down the ramp to the dinghy at the end of the night, gracefully stepped into the dinghy and promptly bounced straight out and overboard for an involuntary swim!

## WEEK EIGHT

### Day 50 – Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> December, 2009

After a rather slow start to the day and plenty of coffee Lynne, Trish, Fitz and the dogs went for a walk along the esplanade whilst Eric worked on fixing the starboard engine ready for the final leg of this trip to Knysna. In the evening we went ashore for dinner at the yacht club and enjoyed sharing stories with the other visiting yachties and members of the club, who were very welcoming and friendly. The light at sunset was spectacular and was even more stunning with the double rainbow over the river.

### Day 51 – Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2009

We had an early start today as Lynne & Trish set off at 0700 and drove the 580km back to Knysna whilst Eric, Fitz and the dogs sailed there. Most of the passage was motoring as there was little or no wind.

### Day 52 – Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2009

On passage we managed to hoist the spinnaker for about 6 hours before the wind died again and we motored until midnight then sailed downwind with the 2 headsails through until daylight. During the spinnaker run we saw a sunfish, plenty of dolphins and the dogs became rather agitated when 2 seals attempted to board the swim platforms for a free ride!

### Day 53 – Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2009

At 0800 we entered Knysna Heads and motored to the anchorage off the Yacht Club, where the dogs were delighted to be reunited with ‘mum’ again after 2 days pining her absence. Finally we had arrived at our destination, Knysna. We are looking forward to at least seeing Christmas and New Year in here then we’ll decide what & where from here.....