

website on a windy Wednesday morning indicated that staying ashore would be a wise decision. So we rented a car to tour the delights of Great Barrier Island. Making our way to Claris, we swapped the small, cramped Mazda for a mini van at GBI Rentals and then it was off to Tryphena to visit the Irish Pub for lunch. Big problem – the pub doesn't open until 4.00pm today. So with spirits slightly dampened (or dried in this instance), we opted for the bakery/café next door.

A leisurely drive around the coastline of Tryphena Harbour found a promising watering hole at Mulberry Grove to visit on the return trip. Had a pit-stop at the wharf area and spotted a stingray cruising in about 300mm of water near the road.

During the drive to Mulberry Grove our driver, Captain Cloudy, received a call from his daughter in the Land of Oz. Suddenly his driving demeanour changed and he braked erratically while heading towards the side of the road. It didn't take a rocket scientist to



An unusual steel sculpture on the roadside at Puriri Bay warranted a photo for prosperity. Left to right: Frank, David, Ken and Russell. Kevin was practicing his camera skills.

interpret the dopey look on his face, the tears in his eyes and the silly smile: Captain Cloudy was to become a grandfather. He was forthwith known to our group only as Poppa Smurf. Cheers and congratulations ensued and we resumed the trip to the Mulberry Grove bar where the inevitable toasting took place, albeit a tad briefly as there was still a few miles of treacherous highway to negotiate on

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