

Message in bottle found on Long Island beach after long trip at sea

A message in a bottle has been found on a beach on Long Island, in the Whitsundays, after travelling 793 days and more than six thousand kilometres since it was dropped in the ocean in the South Pacific over two years ago.

A staff member of Long Island's Elysian Retreat, Charlton Craggs, stumbled across the exciting find while walking along the island's beach recently.

After reading the message, Mr Craggs tracked down the message's author, Tom Love, a Canadian gentleman who had been travelling with his wife, Dora, on cruise ship, Oceania 'Marina', in the South Pacific in January 2016.

"I was so excited and couldn't wait to contact the author to tell him I'd found his message – it was like something out of a movie," Mr Craggs said.

The couple were enjoying their last night of their cruise, from Valparaiso, Chile, to Papeete, French Polynesia, when Mr Love decided to place a message, which he had scrawled on an envelope, in an empty wine bottle and drop it into the ocean.

Mr Love was amazed to hear his message was discovered and stated he was particularly surprised that the bottle had found its way to the Whitsundays, in Queensland, Australia.

"I got straight online, after hearing the news, and found that the message had travelled over 6,200 kilometres to your beach, in the Whitsundays," he said.

"It must have travelled past islands like Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, and so many inhabited and uninhabited landfalls."

The message was nothing like what you would expect to see on a romantic movie; it merely contained some brief details about the cruise, the date, Mr Love's contact details and an American one-dollar bill, to cover the finder's costs of making contact.

That said, Tourism Whitsundays' General Manager, Tash Wheeler, confirmed the interesting find is already generating some publicity for the Whitsundays.

"This is a great little story, and one which will certainly bring about some heightened interest in our beautiful region, particularly Long Island.

"It has already gained the interest of a news channel in Canada and we expect to see more media coverage as word of the discovery spreads further," Ms Wheeler said.

The message is set to take pride of place behind the Elysian Retreat's bar when the retreat opens later this year.

Tourism Whitsundays and Mr Craggs have encouraged Mr Love and his wife to consider the Whitsundays for their next holiday, which, of course, would provide them an opportunity to see, first-hand, where the bottle was discovered.

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