

Melbourne Whittley Cruiser Club

August 07 - Club Cruise Report



Westernport Bay

Yaringa Marina - August 18 & 19

August can be such a grey and rainy time; but what a fantastic weekend we had. The weather was perfect and the water was calm. All you had to do was be out on the water to enjoy life to the full. Any problems? Pffff - somewhere else!

Yaringa was the home port for Melbourne Whittley Cruiser Club's cruise of 18 & 19 August. A quaint marina nestled into a protected harbour at the north end of Westernport Bay. As a members only marina MWCC were privileged to enjoy the hospitality of Yaringa Marina.

Arriving on Friday night many of our club boats made themselves comfortable for the night and the next morning awoke to a beautiful day and a relaxed breakfast at the alfresco café. The rest of the cruise members arrived after breakfast and the flotilla headed out through the channel to enjoy a truly sensational day on one of the best waterways in our state.



Heading south down the bay past Hastings, some members were keen to spot seals at the Nobbies. But Mary on board Juliet doesn't do oceans, so Juliet headed around the tip of French Island, past Tortoise Head and into the idyllically calm rural scene of Blakes Channel - rolling green pastures by the beach, scattered trees, calm waters, and the odd seagull whiling away the sun drenched hours floating listlessly on the water. Ratty in Wind In The Willows said it all when he mused "There's nothing quite so good as messing about in boats". The crew of Juliet spent a couple of hours just drifting around enjoying a ploughman's lunch and feeling thankful for such a wonderful part of the world.

The rest of the fleet variously headed out to the seals. Although not rough, the large rolling swell caused some concern and only a couple of boats ventured out to the rock. One crew member on Still Cruisin' was less well than swell so a new heading was set for Rhyll on the north eastern side of Phillip Island.



The MWCC Boats moored up at Rhyll, a delightful little seaside village and crews strolled along the foreshore to a magnificent fish & chippery to enjoy leatherjacket and calamari for lunch, while the kids played on the grass. How good is life when you share it through a boat club enjoying simple pleasures!

Juliet rejoined the fleet at Rhyll, almost absent minded after such a relaxing lunch at Tortoise Head and we all set off once more to explore magnificent Westernport Bay.

Heading west through the Shipping Anchorage between Phillip Island and French Island, then north at the Western Passage up into the North Arm, Bay Cruiser fell behind. Their engine had loosened a wire and was intermittently cutting out. After radio banter such as "Have you checked your ignition safety cord?" was answered very politely, the mechanical experts boarded and tried to rectify the problem, without any luck. So the 'big 8' came around and hooked up a towline. Membership has its benefits and its safety considerations.

Club Cruise Report

That evening a magnificent meal was enjoyed at the Yaringa restaurant. Stories of the day were shared and expanded upon, before enjoying that deepest most contented sleep that only comes as you float on protected water with the gentle sounds of serenity.

The next day was possibly even better than the first, or at least 'all my troubles seemed so far away' (someone should write a song about that). The sun was shining and the wind was still. Bay Cruiser had taken advantage of the 6:00am high tide to easily remount the trailer and was standing ready to head off to the mechanic as people stirred for breakfast.

The order of the day seemed to be northern bay exploration and fishing. We headed out through Yaringa Channel into Watson Inlet then south along Watson Channel into Bagge Harbor. The exhilaration of fresh morning air, still water and 40knots up on the plane is indescribable except to fellow boaties. There was happiness among MWCC members.

We headed past Eagle Rock and then anchored on the leeward side of Crawfish Rock, trying our luck with a line. The tide was coming in and the theory was the fish would be sheltering on the leeward side facing toward the rock. Well that was the theory.



After a morning cuppa we left Crawfish Rock and some of the boats headed past Scrub Point and into Chicory Lane while another headed off to Joes Island for more fishing.

In Chicory Lane the sounder lit up - there were fish by the dozen showing hefty arches in schools everywhere, but alas (or fortunately for the fish) we were now deep into French Island Marine National Park. So we just enjoyed knowing there were fish all around us in a really beautiful spot, protected from even the inexperienced fishermen.

Club Cruise Report

Next we decided to try our luck heading through Tooradin Channel towards Sawtell Inlet - at low tide! Watching the sounder like a hawk we picked our way through the channel. Spurred on by the thought of a cappuccino at Tooradin we edged closer to our goal. The map showed there was a jetty and a boat ramp so we were hopeful. But within 10 metres of our destination the sounder showed we were in ½ meter of water. Close, but no cappuccino.

We wound our way back and rendezvoused at Crawfish Rock for lunch and more chatting.

Then we headed back to Yaringa having had a truly magnificent weekend afloat - relaxed, happy, at peace with the world and everyone in it.

Being a member of the Melbourne Whittley Cruiser Club brings great opportunity for enjoying our beautiful Victorian waterways and this weekend was no exception.

To join us in exploring our beautiful waterways all you need to do is :

Buy a Whittley cruiser from J.V. Marine (new or second hand) and be yourself.

MWCC will make you feel welcome and together we will go where your imagination takes us.

Join the Melbourne Whittley Cruiser Club

www.WhittleyCruiserClub.com.au

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Live the Whittley Dream

