

A trip to the Whitsundays September – October 2013

MWCC members

Peter & Tuppence **Mabel2**
John, Helen, Amy and Bella **Shalimar**

I took off for my daunting trip of around 2,500 kilometres from my home to Airlie Beach on the 16th of September for a final destination of Hamilton Island Marina.

The first day was an easy trip to just outside Wangarratta where I met up with John and Helen who were also heading up to Queensland for the Whitsundays cruise.

We set off from Markwood near Wangarratta on the first day of our trip at around 7:00 am in quite unfavourable weather conditions very overcast and alternating between rain and drizzle.

Our itinerary was to get to Coonabarabran. Fortunately on the way the weather did improve, the further north, the better the weather.

Once arrived at the Coonabarabran Caravan park it was time to have some food, water the dogs and go to sleep.

Day 2 was only a short trip to Morree to the Gwydir caravan park and Thermal pools. We arrived around 12.30 pm and had lunch and then went to see the thermal pools and stayed in the pools for around 4 hours ending up like a prune but what a lovely feeling, with great company and great weather. John and Helen decided to go into the cool pool, but to me it felt like getting out of a nice hot shower into a bath of ice water, but we survived for another day. The pools were wonderful, and if anyone goes near Morree I would suggest they stay a night or two and enjoy themselves in a relaxing thermal pool.

Day 3 started out fine with a big day on the road, our destination was Theadore a horse riding club with amenities. The weather was hot and humid, and as previously done, at the end of the drive it was food and bed for the night.

Day 4 was another big day for the cars, our destination was St Lawrence to another horse riding area for the night.

Day 5 was finally Airlie Beach or in our case Canonvale.

We arrived at the Sea Breeze Caravan park at Canonvale and booked in for 2 nights, 1 to recover from the drive and 2 to get supplies for the upcoming trip on the water.

While on land we checked out the launching facilities around the area we decided to launch at Canonvale and store our trailers and car in the caravan park.

Once up in Airlie Beach we met up with some members from other Whittley clubs.

The launching day was here, all we had to do is blow up our rubber duckies and launch our cruisers, its a bit different up there as the tides are a lot bigger, so the use of the tender is to our advantage.

For example, I had to put the tender in the water and tied it up to Mabel 2 and then launched both, drove out to a spot where I could drop anchor, and once secure, get into the tender and row to the boat ramp, pull the tender up and out of the way, so I could park the trailer and car. John did the same. On return to the ramp it was into the tenders and out to our boats for the first day on the water in the Whitsundays.

We went out to Hook Island and had lunch at Stonehaven Anchorage and then ventured into Nara Inlet and into Refuge Bay for our first night on the water. The following morning was glorious, the colour of the water a beautiful aqua colour, depending on where the sun was it turned to different colours and shades. This was the day when we met up with the people from the other Whittley Clubs, at the Hamilton Island Marina. We started the day off well and pulled into Cid Harbour and had some lunch, then it was off to Hamilton.

But alas Shalimar had a big belly ache, she did not want to go any further, so Mabel 2 went back to help out. After around an hour we eventually got Shalimar going and headed off to Hamilton Island Marina at a slowish pace. In hindsight Shalimar was in Guardian Mode (limp home mode for cars). We did arrive and were shown to our berths and met up with all the other Whittley People berthed at the Marina.

The following morning it was a walk for Tuppence around the marina as she was not permitted in the shopping area, and then back on the boat while we, the humans, went for a stroll around the shopping complex. The next morning was taken up with Shalimars stubborn problem, After many tries on water and some head banging it was agreed to call in the experts from Airlie Beach Mercruiser, with their diagnostic machine, hoping to shed some light on the problem, but as we were at the Marina and they were at Airlie Beach, they would not be there until the Monday morning, so it was a disappointment for John and Helen who had come from Victoria to Hamilton Island to just sit in their cruiser at Hamilton Island Marina and wait for help to arrive.

I was invited to go for an overnight trip to Turtle Bay for some snorkelling (1st Time) so we were off on the water to Turtle Bay. Once we were anchored, it was time to eat, then in the water for some snorkelling, we used our rubber duckies to get closer to the coral reefs, once in the water with the mask, snorkel and flippers on, a magnificent sight, it

definitely is another world under the water, with fish just slowly swimming around in no hurry to get anywhere, and they were not worried about a human trying to snorkel around them. After a couple of mouthfuls of salty water I was getting the hang of this snorkelling. The coral that was there was ok, not anything to write home about but, it was lovely with all the different sea life and things on the sea floor.

During the later part of the day we ventured to another area of Turtle Bay for some more snorkelling, this was a small but pretty area of coral.

The following morning we shifted to Chance Bay for a look and snorkel and when we finished lunch, and had a peaceful rest, it was back to Hamilton Island Marina.

John and Helen were still on the berth and pleased to see us. The next two days we did not venture anywhere as the conditions in the Marina were 10 times better than outside so it was maintenance time for me at least. We had another go at John's problem cruiser, still to no avail. The Mercruiser bloke turned up to assess the situation and after changing an idle sensor and checking for any diagnostic problems, of which there was only one which had nothing to do with the problem, he left and did some work on crafts in the Marina, he returned the following day and took the boat on the water and saw and felt what the problem was and returned to base to talk it over with the boss. It was determined that the fuel pump MAY be playing up, not sure, John arranged to get a new one, that had to come from somewhere else and there was not one in the Airlie Beach area. So another wait for John and Helen.

The next window of opportunity it was decided to go to Hill Inlet which is behind Whitehaven Beach. We headed from Hamilton passing Crayfish Bay, Turtle Bay, Chance Bay and between Moon Island and a peak off Chance Bay, then into the Solway Passage, passing Frith Rock and Teague Island and finally Haslewood Island which brings us out into Whitehaven Bay. On this particular day the sea was a bit rough and we were bobbing around, I lost a wire grille from my BBQ its on the bottom of Whitehaven Bay somewhere. We headed along the shore line to near Hill Inlet entrance where we were guided into the entrance by Whittley people who had arrived a day earlier, it was a shallow, and winding around the sand bars it was a slow trip down to the other Whittley Cruisers which were rafted up near the Mangroves. Once all of us had arrived it was around happy hour, so some of us went over the other cruisers to get onto Herbs and Tricia boat for some goodies and refreshments. This area was a great place to see how far the tide goes out and how quickly you can get stranded. Cliff and Lockie were fishing off the rear of their cruiser and caught 2 very nice squids which were returned back to the water.

The next day we all went up to Whitehaven Beach in our Rubber Duckies Tuppence included. Once on the sand you sink down to your ankles, the sand here is very fine and white, the area around the beach was very clean.

After the first look around it was a walk through a little pond caused by the tide, around waist height and around 50 metres wide, so Tuppence had to swim, that little obstacle over it was then into the shallows of Whitehaven Bay. There were six of us in the water, and as we walked through the water once again to around waist height, Tuppence was swimming with the occasional wave going over her head, but up she would pop up quite relaxed and enjoying herself. When we found a good spot to cool down we all knelt on our knees and I supported Tuppence while we talked in the water. After about one hour, it was time to head back to our rubber duckies, it was time for Tuppence to swim again. Back near the duckies we decided to sit under the trees and rest until a large Goanna decided to intrude in our little party. During this time we talked to some people on a Catamaran who were locals and asked whether we could follow them out through the entrance from New Inlet the following morning they said no problems, they would be leaving around 7:00 to 7:30 am.

All of the Whittleys left that day from the Mangroves most of them headed back to Hamilton Marina but three of us moored the other side of Whitehaven beach to be guided out the following morning.

An early start, and following the Catamaran through the entrance was easy, it was off again on a round about way back to the Hamilton Island Marina.

Back at the Marina John and Helen were still there and they talked over the possibilities of taking Shalimar out for run the following day.

The big day Shalimar returns to the water outside the Marina, all went well until Shalimar tried to get on the plain, no go and also one of my trim tabs stayed down causing me to be on a bad tilt, so back to the Marina for repairs. My repair was easily fixed, although I would not be able to use the trim tabs for the rest of the trip.

So we went out again and ventured south from the Marina to Driftwood Bay the bottom of the runway and had some lunch and watched the planes coming in and out and did some fishing, Lockie caught a nice Coral Trout which was a keeper.

It was a slow trip there and back but John and Helen enjoyed the time out of the Marina on the water.

During the time spent at Hamilton Island Marina many small excursions were carried out to numerous locations and we enjoyed them all.

One day I was invited to go on one of those golf buggies with Craig Leanne and Keira for a tour around the Island from one end to the other. The Island is very small, but has some very beautiful areas to stay either permanently or for a short holiday. There is a quaint little church which I think is only for weddings, well its set up for them, maybe funerals are carried out there but I didn't see a cemetery on our travels. Thank you Craig, Leanne and Keira for the ride around the Island I thoroughly enjoyed it.

The last night at the Marina was an evening meal for all participants of the Cruise at the resorts Function Centre

Restaurant.

Craig offered his services as a taxi driver again in his golf buggy between the Marina and the resorts Function Centre, which was welcomed by all.

With a good meal, great company, the night soon disappeared, and the Craigs Taxi service was back in business returning friends back to their boats.

The following morning it was to say our farewells to our Whittley friends whom we have met on this holiday in the Whitsundays.

John, Helen, Bella and Amy joined Peter and Tuppence on the journey back to the mainland, it was at a slowish pace something I'm not used too, but because I was Shalimars backup tender I had to conform to the pace.

Along the way Helen suggested we spend another night on the water in the northern part of Hook Island, do some more snorkelling and sight seeing and maybe some fishing.

As we passed Black Island and in between Hayman Island and Hook Island, and when clear and safe to do so we turned to the starboard to go into Maureen's Cove, once moored, it was time for a bite of lunch, then some snorkelling and fishing. Later in the afternoon we wanted to get into a sheltered inlet for the evening.

We decided to go to Butterfly Bay, I started Mabel 2 but Shalimar had its pain in the belly again and would not start, so Mabel 2 went to the rescue again coming alongside with 5 fenders on the side and securing Shalimar, once secured Mabel 2 could tow and manoeuvre both boats onto a mooring in Butterfly Bay. It wasn't a long way to tow Shalimar so we arrived and John picked up the mooring line and secured us both. That evening started out to be nice with a small rocking but as the night seas came in the rocking became more severe, we should have in hindsight moored up singularly, but as I thought I may have had to tow Shalimar back to Airlie Beach, it was worth staying tied together.

In the morning we had breakfast and readied our self for the trip back, John tried to start Shalimar and to the amazement of us all she started. I untied all the ropes and fenders and it was up and go at a slowish pace again but hell I didn't have to tow Shalimar she made it all the way to Canonvale where our trailers and car were.

John and I retrieved our cars and Helen stayed in Shalimar with the engine running while Johns trailer was located on the ramp for Shalimars retrieval which is what happened without any problems.

We would like to thank all the participants on the Whitsunday Cruise for their friendship and easy going nature it was a pleasure to meet all of you and we hope to attend many more trips arranged for Whittley cruisers.

Below is a list of a great bunch of people who have Whittley Cruisers who use them.

The **Friendly** Whittley people who attended the Whitsunday trip over the September – October 2013 period.

Peter & Tuppence	Helen, John, Bella & Amy	Bob & Lea	Brenton & Jacqui
Alex & Angela	Craig, Leanne & Keira	Mark & Jane	Jeremy & Karen
Colin & Alison	Phil & Jenny	Robert & Pat	Roger & Athena
Herb & Tricia	Cliff, Vicki, & Lochie	Richard & Bev	

This article was written by

Peter in Mabel 2, with help from 1st Mate Tuppence

John Helen and I went home another way, first destination was to the Proserpine Lake to flush out our motors, and as it was blowing a gale, rough, and would have been uncomfortable on the water we decided to go on further to Lake Monduran, a very nice area for fishing.

This is were I left John and Helen to see a friend in Hervey Bay who I had not seen for many years.

I left early in the morning and I was outside his house at 08:30 and called up on the phone, he answered and asked me were I was, I replied open up the front door and have a look, he was wrapt that I had arrived, we had breaky and went over past stupidities we did together, then he took me around Hervey Bay for a sight seeing tour, it was great to catch up with John D and Barbara D, why is it we talk about we will go and see some one but we never get around to it, I did and wished I could have stayed longer.

During the evening John and Helen had talked it over and had decided to go down to Lake Boondooma for a couple of days, they rang me and informed me that I should meet up again with them at the Lake.

Lake Boondooma is a very big lake with we believe good fishing at all times, I dont know what area the people writing the article was talking about or who saw the fish but neither John, Helen or myself even got a bite for two days, we tried every thing from baits to plastics and even paid for some different diving lures, all to no avail.

Anyway from here it was load the tinnie on Johns truck and head off for home, we did stop over at Morree for another relaxing couple of hours in the thermal pools.

I would also like to thank John, Helen, Amy and Bella for there company going up to the Whitsundays and back down to Victoria, as well as the good meals had in Shalimar.

Thanks again from Peter and Tuppence

