



Post MWCC Whittley Regatta 2014- Waikerie to Morgan S.A.

When you attend a Whittley Regatta, there are some of us that just don't like the fun times to end!!

Jay & Leanne Davis from Victorian Family Motor Cruising Club and Club Whittley Victoria (VFMCC-CWV) were planning to continue cruising for extra days post the regatta and as Jay invited anyone attending who wanted to join in, having no deadline to be home we tagged along. In all six boats took up the opportunity for more boating on the Murray River – Jay & Leanne Davis – Cruise Leader in Serenity, Michael & Monica Jones in Impulse (VFMCC-CWV) Ray & Maxine Mantle in To the Max, Gary & Lynette Newling in Signed on 4 ..2, Gary & Narelle Baglin in The Palace – I believe all three were from Whittley Club NSW and ourselves in Shalimar from MWCC

Watching most the boats retrieve on the Monday afternoon left a few of us on the waters edge at Waikerie Monday night. John & Joan Coombs in Merlin enjoyed the evening fishing and came up with some good yellow bellies and someone else caught a carp.. but that tinkle of the night bell on Johns line was fairly constant till he put the rod away to turn in.

Up bright and early the following Tuesday morning, John snared another good sized yellow belly – he certainly has the touch!!

The boats not joining us for the further leg prepared to pull out fairly early and the rest of us made ready for the extended journey, fueling up and extra water &

provisions saw us busy. Arrangements were made at the Waikerie Caravan Park for great drive through sites to park the trailers whilst we were away, as there was some concern about their security if left near the foreshore.

All boats participating agreed to be on the water by 1.30pm to make our way down to Loch 2. The river down to this loch was open cruising so we enjoyed a swift trip down to the Loch with beautiful scenery and scores of pelicans on low flying missions skimming by.

Our entry to the Loch went without a hitch and of interest was the marker at the Loch showing the previous flood height levels. We were dropping 3 meters – the level similar in all lochs on the Murray but the flood level marker seemed much higher than the level we dropped but from my position steadying the boat at the rear via the lochmasters rope - I could not get a good look at it to read the highest record. The perception was enough though.. as the river is wide the volume of water must have been immense to gain the height marked.

On leaving the Loch we immediately had to negotiate a very shallow and narrow course, so shallow we passed Pelicans standing on the sand banks very close to the passage. The book gifted to us in our MWCC Whittleby Rally packs is a fantastic resource – South Australian Waters Atlas & Guide of the Coorong, Murray River & Lakes put out by Boating Industry Association of SA. This guide would give any boatie the confidence to traverse the Murray on their own as it is so comprehensive – a great addition to our ‘maps’ and as SA is so accessible, bound to be using it again & again.

Cruising past the consistently majestic scenery which ebbs and flows between cliffs and rolling riversides with eddies of water and plenty of birdlife, Jay suggested we stop for the night at Hogwash Bend which has a sandy beach following a very shallow crossing from one side of the river to the other via navigational markers. And it was shallow.. we practically floated with the leg in the raised position to make it to the bank and it was a good spot to stop as it was out of the main flow, so we were able to give a bit of space between the boats to avoid any fender squeaking.

Once settled a number of Cobs came out to cook the evening meal whilst we enjoyed Happy Hour on shore. Maxine from To the Max impressed with her fancy salmon, cream cheese & capers hors d’ouvres – with the appetising aroma of roast dinners in the background... how come we live so well on the water!!

Plans to light the made campfire after dinner were abandoned by the lure of warm beds as it had turned very cold.

Next morning Gary from Signed on 4.2 found his line had been severed but as couple of us caught more carp the previous evening which were quickly dispatched, speculation as to what had transpired with the possibility of it either being a cod or a pelican.. well, definitely the one that got away!

After breakfast we leisurely continued down the river to Morgan not wanting it to come too quickly as that would mean our extra couple days cruising were at an end, though Jay had everyone looking forward to lunch with his promise of the best ever

Salt and Pepper Squid ☺ at a pub in Morgan. As Jay had done this leg of the trip previously and experienced the delights of this dish on his previous visit he was recommending it to everyone and made sure by ringing ahead that the chef was able to provide the quantity of squid for our eager group. This set up a chain of events as the word got out that our group of six boats was coming to town and a reporter turned up to take a shot of us for the local paper. The curator of the local historical museum also turned up as part of the welcoming committee and offered to open the museum for us after we had our promised lunch (a tour we all found most interesting)

So we all hit the Terminus Hotel in Morgan for lunch and it did not disappoint – truly a must try that Salt & Pepper Squid. Our lunch was so sustaining we did not need any tea that night.. though some did venture to the second pub in Morgan (The Commercial) but I heard tell that some had ‘kids’ meals as they were not that hungry, but we did our bit at spending a few dollars in Morgan which is a pretty town and reliant on the tourist \$ these days.

Another restful night on the water in a great location with no passing traffic and waking to yet another day of glorious weather. Today being Thursday and retrieval day, Jay had arranged a Taxi Bus to collect the men and return to Waikerie to pick up cars and trailers, drive back to Morgan and load the boats. The big launching ramp was on our side of the river but after checking out the car ferry for the return trip home with boats in tow, it was decided that the approach was somewhat steep and some ski boats had been observed trying to cut across the approach to the ferry to avoid hitting the skeg of the leg – our boats were bound to find the tar/steel/cement being bigger and deeper than a ski boat when loaded so further investigation found another ramp further down the river on the other side past the ferry, which avoided the need to use the car ferry with the boats loaded.

This ramp was smaller but perfect for our purpose – only the parking was a little tight. All boats retrieved easily and it was a short road trip back to Waikerie Caravan Park for Happy Hour. The other 5 crews were having dinner in town, but we said our goodbyes prior as we planned an early start for the trip home by dawn next day.

Traffic was light and fortunately no roos to be seen at that early hour so we made our way across the border back into Victoria. Twelve and a half hours later we were home safe and sound.

This was our second Whittleby Regatta and it was great to see some familiar faces and meet new ones. The organisation was second to none and the spirit of enjoying our boats in the company of others participating, made for a memorable trip particularly on the great Murray River.

Thanks to Jay & Leanne for extending the invitation for those extra days to Morgan S.A. – we look forward to the next meet up.

Helen & John Fawcett (with Bella & Amy)
Shalimar

