

Eildon Cruise Feb 2015

Peter & Audrey Nicolopoulos

Tony & Gemma Dickson

Mike & Monica Jones

Stuart Malone

Darrell & Shirley Stephenson

Jay and Leanne Davis

John, Jane, Matilda & Fletcher Archibald

Conkiki

G & T

Impulse

Zero Tolerance

True Blue

Serenity

Archie

Pre-Tip:

Eildon is my all-time favourite destination for boating, and so Tony and I escaped Melbourne Thursday night, having taken the Friday the 13th off. Leaving at 7pm, it was an easy 3 hour drive along the Ring Rd, up the Hume Hwy and taking the Tallarook exit through to Bonnie Doon. To unwind, we enjoyed our first G&T for the weekend and slept soundly in our floating-caravan cruiser!

In the morning, we could see more clearly that the water levels were down to 69%, so only one ramp was suitable for our launching, and even then we had a minor scrape as we came off the trailer. We were keen to see our boat started, having had its major servicing to rectify a few problems. We were over the moon when it started first time, and once out in the lake, purred like a V8 kitten should! Yihaa.

Friday the 13th was shaping up to be a hot one, with forecast storms, so we headed for the Delatite where we floated and swam till the winds picked up. We trialled our drogue which is like a blue vinyl windsock, which we tied to the back of the boat, and proved a great success in limiting out drift, particularly as the wind kept changing direction.

Menacing clouds started to billow across from the East, with a strong breeze gaining momentum. It was a little odd, as the weather forecast was coming from the West, so we climbed the hill to check on our position for safety. We had tied down and anchored into shore, and all seemed fine. We had chosen a site that was shaped like a horseshoe, and could actually fit maybe up to 10 or 12 boats. The ridges of the hill were steep so we couldn't be better off. By now a few of us had arrived at Eildon, all in our various positions for the night. Jay and Leanne had dinner at the new Jerusalem Creek restaurant, Pete & Audrey and the Archibald's all at our home base, and Darrell and Shirley tucked into the bay adjoining us.

The storm was a spectacular light show, with some terrific rumbles of thunder, and although I am sure the wind was strong in the open, we were pretty protected.



The Eildon Cruise.



The rain became quite heavy, so by 11am on Saturday, our cruise start time was a little tardy, with the last of the rain giving us a major wash down. We even threatened to consider an early Happy Hour, but with the sun not yet out, let alone across the yard-arm, we settled for a coffee!

By noon though, we had caught up with Mike and Monica, passed Jay and Leanne as they entertained kids and friends in the Delatite arm, and headed off towards Gough's Bay to find a good spot for the night.

We ended up a little further down from the Taylor's Creek campground in Big River, allowing enough room for all our boats, but only just. We all enjoyed lots of swimming, adventuring in our dingy's and entertainment from the Archibald's dog Bindi, who was addicted to paddling in the water and trying to snap at the splashing water.

The kids had an absolute ball, with Fletcher using his Go-Pro, and Matilda on and off her boogie board. When the other kids arrived, they all became more at ease over the next day, paddling in the dingy and playing.



We on the other hand watched Stuart disappear in the early morning for his ritual run up the mountains with his compass and orienteering maps, and we enjoyed a breakfast, gentle swim behind the boats, and paddling in our dingy's. We must remember to get a few photos of Stuart next time as he returns from his mountain runs, as it really is quite unbelievable!!

Sunday was absolutely superb. Too lovely in fact!

We know that good weather means speed boats and jet skis, and having watched a young couple at death defying speeds race passed through the dead trees in twilight, wished the water police were out more. We meandered our way back up the river and up to check out the new restaurant at Jerusalem Creek. Well, we can say it is spectacular.... With lots of covered seating areas with terrific views, to be enjoyed in rain, hail and shine. We all enjoyed a drink and or lunch, and considered more options of launching here and enjoying a Friday night meal before a Saturday launch.

Jay in the meantime had to pull our early to work on his trailer, so hope that all finished well for him on that score.



With 2pm already racing by, those pulling out headed off to Bonnie Doon only to find boats, jet skis, cars and trailers everywhere, all ready to pull out. So instead of the 20 minute exit, it took nearly 2 hours. Darn it!!! One ramp, and too many people waiting in the hot sun. Stuart did the sensible thing given he had time, and took off to wait it out. But Pete & Audrey and G & T had to get going, so our departure was nearing 4pm.

I only wish I could have stayed the extra night with Mike and Monica, and Darrell and Shirley. Oh well, the end of a fabulous few days at Lake Eildon. Thanks to everyone that came, and sorry to all of you that couldn't make it.

Gemma Dickson