

# The Melbourne Whittley Cruiser Club



## Mildura Cruise – Reconnaissance Cruise Report

Wednesday 20 to Friday 22 September

Gary Honeychurch & John Beckman

On Wednesday morning 20 September, John and I picked up JB Squared from AquaPower marine in Seaford and headed to Mildura to do a two day test run on the new 300 horsepower V8 that had just been installed in John & Joy's 2600.

We arrived in Mildura at 5:00pm and negotiated with Julian at Mildura Lock 11 to leave the vehicle and trailer in the Lock masters secure compound for two nights while we did a reconnaissance cruise on the Murray River and gave the new V8 a good test run.

We launched at the main Mildura boat ramp and motored down to moor at the Mildura Warf for the night. The next morning we heading through Lock 11 and downstream to Wentworth the junction of the Murray and Darling Rivers, making notes, recording depths, navigational markers and possible mooring sights on the Murray River Charts that Lee & I had purchased from the Mildura visitors centre at Easter, all for planning for the November Mildura Cruise.



The Murray and the Darling and two very different rivers. Different in width and colour. The Darling is distinctly green compared to the brown of the Murray. We cruised about 10Km up the Darling and found a good camp site. As the Darling River is in NSW, the land is owned right down to the water line, unlike in Victoria where from the water line there is 60m of Crown land. So we continued up stream until we found the next house and meet with the owner to confirm if we could camp on their land over cup week end in November. They were appreciative of us enquiring and were

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quite happy for us to camp on their land, but did inform us we may have some house boat company as a group of blokes from Melbourne stay in that same area each year over cup week end to get away from the city.

We open up the new V8 on the way back to Mildura from Wentworth on Thursday afternoon and were very impressed with how nicely she cruised along the Murray. We had a plan to check out the Pub and moorings at Gol Gol, which is 8.5 minutes on the plane above Mildura and had to get there before dark. We shared the Lock with the wood fired Paddle steamer, Melbourne on the way through to a very relaxing night enjoying a meal in the beer garden at the Gol Gol Pub with a view or the sunset over the Murray.

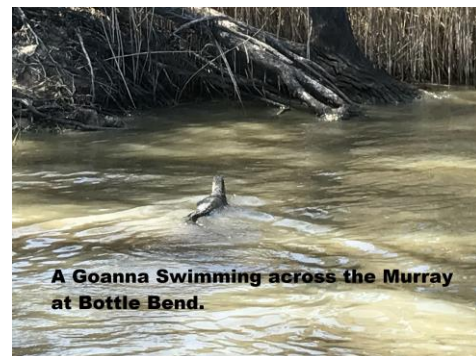


*Mildura - Lock 11 - Heading Up Stream with the Paddlesteamer - "Melbourne"*

Friday was a beautiful 32 degree day in Mildura, which made it extremely comfortable cruising up the Murray approximately 30kms. We left Gol Gol and slowly cruised up stream past Trentham Cliffs, Psyche Bend and Red Cliffs, to a place called Bottle Bend where we came across a Goanna swimming across the Murray.



**Red Cliffs - Up stream from Mildura**



**A Goanna Swimming across the Murray at Bottle Bend.**

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Cruising back down stream we stopped at Trentham Winery, to enquire about reserving mooring space on their landing and the possibility of meals and wine tasting. We found that there are very few jetties and most moorings are more like a landing, or retaining wall on the river bank built for house boats to nudge into.

All seemed very nice at Trentham Winery and a place where you could easily settle in for a relaxing afternoon on the lawns under the shade sails with a couple of bottles of local product, but we were on a reconnaissance cruise, and no time for relaxing as we had 10 hours drive ahead of us to get home and we still had to stop back at Gol Gol pub to meet with the manager to confirm the use of his private jetty for a night, and have a quick meal before we took the boat out and the Mildura ramp.

When collecting the Vehicle & Trailer from the Lock Masters yard we noticed a lot of grease had spewed out of two of the bearing buddies.

As a precaution we jacked the trailer up to check if we had failed bearings. To our surprise we found three off four trailer wheels could not be rotated by hand.

We had a brake problem!

An hour spent at Sunraysia Marina, and they confirmed that three of four brake positions had rust, causing them to seize and lock in the on position. The blokes there were more than helpful, particularly the owner Jak Kane, on a Friday afternoon, very close to knock off time.

They got us going and we finally got the boat on the trailer started down the road to Latrobe Valley at about 5:00pm and arrived home at 3:00am Saturday morning.

Mildura is a beautiful place with easy access to the Murray and Darling Rivers. We are looking forward to returning for a 5 day adventure cruise between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of November 2017.

*Gary Honeychurch*

