



Melbourne Whittley Cruiser Club Inc.

MWCC Lake Tyers Cruise March 15th – 17th 2019

The best laid plans of mice and men were turned into disappointment for our group of eager Lake Tyers cruise participants. After an inspection cruise of Lake Tyers on the weekend of March 2nd was cut short due to bushfires on our doorstep, it was decided to do a quick trip to the lake on the Wednesday prior to the cruise commencing on Friday 15th to check on water levels at the boat ramps which appeared to show enough water for all boats to launch. However, the lake relies heavily on rainfall to top up the water levels and in recent times East Gippsland has been in drought, also the lake water levels drop occasionally from what is thought to be seepage through the beach bar between the lake and ocean.

As members of the club arrived on Friday reports started to filter through that water levels in the lake may have lowered further from the Wednesday inspection. Lower levels coupled with an unexpected fishing competition on the lake with over 30 small boats taking part meant we enacted a fall-back strategy.

MWCC Lakes Entrance/Gippsland Lakes/Duck Arm Cruise March 15th – 17th 2019

Cruise Members:

- Laurie and Dael Jackson -- *Mahalo*
- Renato and Domenica Grecco -- *The Boss*
- Peter and Audrey Nicolopoulos -- *ConKiki*
- George and Sandy Anton -- *Mana 1*
- Wayne and LeeAnn Carpenter -- *LeeWay*
- Jay Davis -- *JayJay*
- Gary and Lee Honeychurch -- *Lucky Us*
- Russell Brequet and Deb Furtulla -- *Our Time*
- Jeremy and Karen Bowler -- *Karalyn II*
- Paul and Marielle VanPampus -- *Groovy Ruvie*

When the decision was made to abandon the Lake Tyers cruise, we decided to put in at Lakes Entrance on the North Arm and all meet at the floating pontoons in front of the Central Hotel on the Esplanade which opens up to a large array of cafes, eateries and retail shopping along the waterfront, also walking opportunities in the morning and the chance to purchase fresh seafood from the fishing fleet on the docks. Most of the group took the opportunity for a pub meal on the Friday night and some even went for an evening walk after dinner. In the morning after a good night's rest and a quick breakfast we had a team meeting where the course for the cruise was mapped out and agreed on.

With the promise of good weather for the weekend, with wind building late on both days, it was decided to make wake at 9:30am for Duck Arm on the Banksia Peninsula via Paynesville for an overnight stay. We left the Cunningham Arm travelling across the entrance on the lake side with an outgoing tide and into the Hopetoun Channel where we had a short stop at the Barrier Landing for a brief info session. Then we were off between Rigby and Fraser Islands and into the Reeve Channel for the run up to Boxes Creek for a look at a future possible overnight stay, lunch or brekkie destination. Boxes Creek is a small bolthole with a drop toilet and beaches with deep water and access at the rear



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Karalyn II taking centre stage at Boxes Creek

of the boats. It's fantastic for swimming and it is a great place to shelter from inclement weather with easily enough room for us with our 10 boats and more if required. We continued on our way going past Metung in preference for a stop at Paynesville, where the trip across Lake King to Paynesville was



The Boss in full flight across Lake King

a dream run with all boats on the plane all the way over making for a quick transition. When we arrived at Paynesville, Gary led a number of the group on a tour of the canals (like a mini tour of the rich and famous houses of the village) all boats were able secure mooring on the jetties along the waterfront for an opportunity to partake of lunch, coffee, toilets and retail therapy for supplies etc.



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When we got going on the last leg of the trip, we encountered an easterly wind whipping down the lake making it slow going until we got to the Newlands Arm Headland and from there, we could run straight at Duck Arm with the wind at our backs.



Whittley's on the run to Duck Arm



Parked on the beach at Duck Arm

Once we were all squared away a number of the group went for a swim, others tried their hand at fishing while most went on shore to set up for an activities session. We had a trivia list with answers coming from all in the group finishing off with a "who am I" which went right down to the 1 point question with the answer - Cameron Smith coming from Lee Honeychurch....well done! After a social session, Gary setup the course for the inaugural running of the MWCC Duck Cup, ducks were handed out to each boat crew with permanent marker pens for the personal decoration and naming of the racers. Interesting artistic work was applied and 1 duck even received an innovation resembling a winged keel.

The birds were carried by the starter to the head of the course and released a little too close to the beach and so a restart was called for. After the reset, we were away with several ducks making a run for the lines (multidirectional finish lines) and with a gust of wind and much cheering from the owners, it was 1 duck that made a dash for the line to cross marginally in front of the hotly pursuing field. It was "The Boss" first over the line to claim the title of winner of the 1st MWCC Duck Cup, the race that stopped a party (there were rumblings about that winged keel). There were songs about each boat and songs picked by several of the crews which resulted in interesting listening and some very different renditions of songs. With light fading, it was back to the boats for a spot of dinner and much needed sleep.



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All ducks away in the MWCC Duck Cup

I would like to pay tribute to and give a big pat on the back to Karen and Jeremy for the hospitality they showed to a young couple who were stranded in Duck Arm overnight with no food or refreshments on their yacht. Due to the high winds from the east and an inexperience at sailing in these blustery conditions, Karen and Jeremy took them in and shared their evening meal (the food smelled absolutely delicious) and drinks with the young folk which I thought was very neighbourly of them. Well done guys!!!

Sunday saw the weather forecast change slightly with wind speed increasing at an earlier time in the day, so it was decided to leave Duck Arm and head for Boxes Creek for brekkie. As with the run over to Paynesville on the previous day, the trip back to the creek was a dash which was trouble free.

I must say it is a great sight at the front of the line to look back to see all boats steaming along on the plane with the skippers keeping it all together.....fantastic work to all. In Boxes Creek, safe and sound, we settled in to have brekkie, some went for a swim, others chose to relax and one of the boats left the group for an early start for the long trip back to home. After a bit of relaxation, breakfast and swimming the remaining 9 boats parted ways with 5 of the boats heading for the Lakes boat ramp and the 4 remaining boats (who were staying the extra night) either going to Metung or back to the floating jetties at Lakes.

This was our first cruise as cruise leaders and it was daunting to have to come up with a fall-back plan after putting in a lot of work for the Lake Tyers trip. It was made so much easier with a couple of old pro's at the process with Gary and Lee and also having Jay as the tail-end Charlie. I'm sure there were several others on the cruise we could have consulted at any time with any problems we encountered, as we are blessed with such a wealth of experience in the ranks of our club.

In closing I would like to welcome Russell Brequet and Deb Furtulla to the club with their very nice looking CR2380 *Our Time* and personally praise everyone who attended the cruise for making our job as cruise leaders stress free. Also, a special mention to 2 non MWCC members in Gary's Mum and Dad, Lois and Alf for transporting Lee to the Lakes to join the cruise on Friday night.



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We look forward to catching up with all members on future cruises sometime, somewhere on the water in our Whittley boats.

Cheers Laurie and Dael



A beautiful sunset at Duck Arm with a couple of residents making the photo complete