



## Melbourne Whittley Cruiser Club Inc.

### Cruise Report – Sydney Harbour New Year’s Eve Cruise – 27 Dec 2019 to 2 Jan 2020

Nine Boats from the Melbourne Whittley Cruiser Club registered to attend the Sydney Harbour, New Years Eve Cruise, some intending to live on their boats for up to 10 days. Our first casualty was John & Jenny in “Double J”. They had everything packed and ready to go and took the boat for a test run on Port Phillip Bay on 26/12/19 to watch the Melbourne to Hobart yachts exit the heads and had to be towed from the Heads back to Martha’s Cove by the Coast Guard. Unfortunately, we were now down to 8 Victorian and 5 NSW Boats that would take on the Sydney Harbour New Years’ Eve Cruise.

On the 27/12/2019, Lucky Us, headed off along the Princes Highway via Bruthen, Cann River, Bombala to stay at a very smoky Canberra for the night. Two crews were already in Sydney, and the rest were travelling up the Hume Highway. We were up early the next morning to head to Nowra where we had left our boat in storage after the Port Stephens cruise in November. We had a very scenic drive down the Kangaroo Valley road to Nowra. Restocked the boat and left Nowra at midday to head for Sydney. Arrived at the Wharf Road boat ramp to find Craig and Cody getting “Sea Ya” ready to launch. They were off to pick up the rest of the family who had flown over from Hobart. We also met David with “DFJT”. We headed down the Parramatta River to join the others who were rafted for the evening in Rozelle Bay (just under the Anzac Bridge). We arrived to find the Victorian Crews - Siennabelle (Mario & Fil), See ya (Craig, Alanna, Cody, Tahlia, Zac), To The Point (Dean, Tracey, Bryce), The Boss (Renato & Dom), Casper (Peter & Gail), Our Time (Russell & Deb) with the NSW crews Athena (Roger & Athena), Marie Christine (Michael), Tranquillite (Bruce & Sharon).



*Rozelle Bay & the ANZAC Bridge*



*A walk to the fish market, the boats rafted in the background*

Next morning (Sunday 29 December) we were up and went for a walk to the fish market which was just around in the next bay. The amount of seafood for sale was amazing. The fresh juices and chocolate coated fresh fruit was a hit with the walking team. On our way back we stopped for coffee at a lovely old house that has been converted to a café – thanks to local knowledge from Michael.



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*So Deb, you found the biggest "Old Prawn"!*



*Sydney Fish Market*

Back onboard our boats we decided it was time for a swim so we headed off under the Harbour Bridge to Clontarf Beach in Middle Harbour. It was a little rough in the harbour but all arrived safely and got the water toys out to play for the afternoon. Some enjoyed the luxury of an ice-cream from the ice-cream boat that was zipping in and out of the many boats that were out enjoying the hot weather. We headed further up Middle Harbour to raft up in Sugarloaf Bay for the evening. A beautiful location where the tenders came out and raced each other around the bay.



*"The Boss" on a choppy Sydney Harbour*



*Smokie conditions in Sugarloaf Bay*



*The Cave up, way up Sugarloaf creek*





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A group of tenders headed up further up Sugarloaf Bay the next morning to explore the creek and caves located at the end of the bay.

After a leisurely morning we headed back to Clontarf Beach for more fun time in the water and then around to Athol Bay to join more of the NSW Whittley Club for the evening. We rafted up just off the beach near Taronga Zoo which had spectacular views looking back over the water to the Opera House, CBD and Harbour Bridge. It was a bit lumpy to start with due to the boat traffic on the Harbour but settled down after 8 pm. It was lovely to lie in your boat and listen to the animals in the zoo.



*Athol Bay below Taronga Zoo*



*Sydney Harbour at 4:00am with no Ferry traffic*

Next morning (Tuesday 31 December) everybody was checking the weather sites. The forecast was not great. A very strong cool change was expected early evening and would make it very uncomfortable staying in Athol Bay. South easterly winds up to 50 km per hour were expected. After much discussion it was decided that it would be best to head back to Rozelle Bay for New Year's Eve.



*Rozelle Bay – Thomas & Zac  
Stand up paddle board style.*



*Rozelle Bay Public Transport!*

Right on queue at 6:00pm, the wind changed from NE to SE and increased to over 50km/hour. We were very pleased with our decision to leave Athol Bay and raft up in the calm of Rozelle Bay, very



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protected from the southerly wind. Everybody got into the spirit of NYE and with an extended happy hour across 3 or 4 of the boats in the middle of the 8 boat raft up.



*Happy hour Rozelle Bay New Years Eve*



*Let the New Year's Eve Celebrations begin!*

There was heaps of food and a few drinks and for atmosphere there were heaps of glow sticks and fairy lights to decorate each boat. At 8:30 pm Bryce, Cody & Damien started ferrying all the crews from the boats the 15m to the shore. Bicentennial Park was only a 300m walk from the boats and was one of the listed free vantage points for viewing the fireworks. We could see the back of the Harbour Bridge and 3 of the fireworks barges. The nine o'clock fireworks were just a warm up for the New Year's Eve and got us all fired up and ready to celebrate the new decade at midnight.



*Gary, Lee, Tracey, Domenica & Renato - 9:00 Fire works*



*Rozelle Bay New Year's Eve Raft up with the ANZAC bridge.*

We all returned to tenders and the boys ferried us all back to the boats where the party continued until we all returned to Bicentennial Park at 11:30pm to await the main show. Athena, Marie Christine, Imagine and Happy Dayze, all come to join the 8 Victorian boats in the Raft in Rozelle Bay after the 9:00pm fireworks display.



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Well New Year arrived with a bang! A fireworks display that was just what we needed to welcome the start of 2020. Although we missed the view of the front of the Bridge with the waterfalls of fireworks and the light show from the main part of Sydney Harbour, we were all very pleased to be able to celebrate the New Year together as a group without the stress of very high winds and possibility of boat damage or injury. It was a special night that we celebrated with great friends and family, that will be remembered forever, as “the time we spent together on Sydney Harbour and saw the start of the Roaring 20’s.” A fun night, one tick off the bucket list to be sleeping on our Whittley’s on New Year’s Eve on Sydney Harbour.



Although we were lucky to be able to celebrate in the new year, we all had thoughts of concern for all those families and friends that had and were still being effected by the bushfires burning in WA, SA, Tassie, Victoria and Qld. Particularly some of our own club members directly under threat of fire in Mallacoota and those that had been isolated in Orbost and Bairnsdale on the way to the New Year’s Eve Cruise in Mallacoota. With smoke haze every day on the Harbour a constant reminder of bushfires all around Sydney, you were all, never too far from our thoughts and glad to hear that you are all safe and well and will be back cruising soon and for many more New Year’s Cruises.

It was a slow casual start to 2020 with most enjoying a cooked breakfast then some were readying the boats for the cruise back up the Paramatta River to retrieve the boats and head home.



*David, the "Master Chef" on the "DFJT char Grill". Good on you Russell, Safety first, just in case!*



*To the Point in Woolloomooloo Bay*



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Some were lucky enough to be staying on a couple of extra days and a plan was agreed that we would raft up in Tambourine Bay in Lane Cove, for the first night of the year. We said farewell to DFJT, Our Time & The Boss and all remaining boats went their separate ways to meet for Happy Hour in Tambourine Bay around 4:00pm

“Lucky Us” accepted the offer from “To The Point,” for a cruise around the Opera House to Woolloomooloo Bay to look at the big naval ships and Farm Cove which was next to the Opera House.

On a wake washed choppy Harbour we made our way under the Harbour Bridge, past the Opera House, snapping photos like the tourists. We saw the naval ships and in Farm Cove, “To The Point” had an “Engine Emergency”! The fuel regulator had failed and would not allow the engine to start or run. Well this would be a first! First time Dean and Tracey have had to use their tow rope. Good that they had a tow rope attached to the winch eye on the bow of the boat and stored in the anchor well. First time Lucky Us had towed using the tow bridle attached to the rear tie down points on the boat. First time Dean had been towed under the Harbour Bridge and up the Paramatta River, where two hours later at 4 knots we arrived at Wharf Road boat ramp and winched “To The Point”, onto the trailer. Unfortunately, Dean, Tracey & Bryce had to start their journey home a day early. It all was part of the memories and added to the adventure with no major damage done!



*Farm Cove and "To the Point" just won't go any further! Not a bad spot to stop and enjoy the view!*



*That's something you don't do every day, get towed under Sydney Harbour Bridge!*

Seven boats, arrived in Tambourine Bay for the raft up and stay the night. Three from NSW & four from Victoria. It is a beautiful calm, sheltered bay where we could drop an anchor and stay the night. We couldn't get any sleep until the 11:00pm when the Sydney airport curfew kicked in as we were right under the flight path which did provide entertainment watching the planes appear out of the smoke on their landing approach.



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Happy Hour in Tambourine Bay on Habbv Davze with Alex & Ange Munz

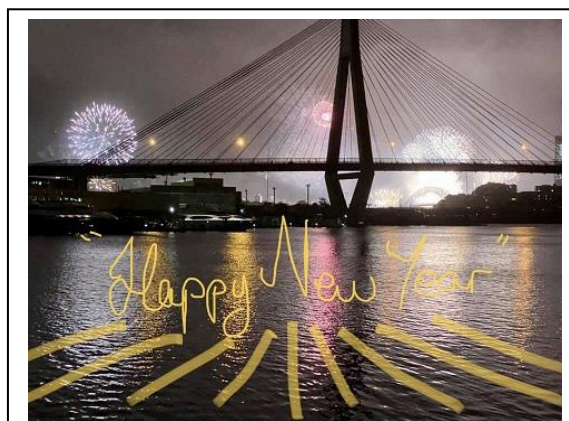


*Cody & Zac exploring Tambourine Bay*

Lucky Us peeled off at 6:00am in the morning, was on the road by 8:00am and arrived home at 7:30pm, leaving Sea-Ya, Sienna Belle and Casper staying for an additional night in a marina on the Harbour where they all enjoyed a good shower and a beautiful restaurant meal for their last meal on the Sydney Harbour Cruise. They all made it safely home after more than a week on Sydney Harbour.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the NSW club members, even those who supported this joint club cruise but could not make it onto the water. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the guidance and assistance of Roger & Athena Gregson, Alex & Angela Munz and Ray & Maxine Mantle for their help in planning and running this cruise. It is a massive undertaking to commit to towing your boat 1000km and to be prepared to stay and cruise for up to 7 days at this time of year with the added threat and risk of fire on our travels and smoke during our cruise. Congratulations to all crews who attended, I love your enthusiasm for life!

Thanks to all those photographers I stole photos from for this report!



I hope you all enjoyed the adventure as much as we did.

To all the crews who attended,

Thanks for the Memories!

Cheers

Gary & Lee Honeychurch

Lucky Us