

Werribee River to Portarlington Cruise Report – 28th – 29th November 2009

There are some sailing adventures that one must write about.

The cruise was advertised in the traditional fashion in the BTYC Magazine and also followed by emailed flier to all Baysiders two weeks prior to the event. Unfortunately probably due to predicted bad weather and other personal commitments of this time of the year, the only participants on the cruise was going to be Wanton. Luckily for me I issued an invitation to all and sundry on the TrailerSailerPlace.com.au forum. Almost immediately I received a number of responses. Helen and me decided we did not want to cancel the sail no matter, even if we only stayed on the river as the flier sent to members said.

On Saturday 28th November at approximately 10 am Wanton met up with Shane (Madmission) in his Boomerang 20 and Brian in his SouthCoast 22 (seaweeds) at Werribee. We had planned to meet up earlier but the skipper on Wanton forgot his wallet at home so we had to go back home to get some moorla for petrol.

We set up as quickly as we could, 20 minutes turned out to be closer to 3/4 of an hour. Shane and Brian came over for a wonder and invited us to lunch after we launched. That was totally unexpected and we accepted and we all four dined in Wanton on Shane's (madmission) deliciously prepared roast complete with "home made beef" so tender you did not need a knife to cut it. All of it cooked on Shane's now famous Cobb cooker. We'll have to get one of them now.



Leaving
Queenscliff

During lunch we discussed the weather forecast and what to do with the rest of the weekend. The wind at that time was moderate from the North West and North East. It was forecast to get a bit (a lot actually) stronger so staying at Port Arlington was not a good option. Shane and Brian suggested Queenscliff. We could sail there OK and find good refuge at the floating pontoon near the Swan Island bridge. Helen is a music buff and she could not resist the prospect of being near the Queenscliff Festival.

We set out and sailed most of the way running in front of moderate to strong winds. Once we got to open water the waves were rolling from our port side and that in combination of the wind from dead astern made Helen uncomfortable. This is not our favourite way to sail. She handed me the wet weather gear and off to bed she went. She stayed there until we arrived near Prince George Bank when Brian signalled me to look to my starboard where he had spotted a pod of Dolphins. I woke Helen up and she forgot about her sea sickness with the site of her favourite marine creature. They rewarded us with a nice swim past and two also decided to do a double loop much to Helen's delight.

By now the wind had died down completely and we were in smooth waters. Down came the sails and we kicked the motor in and motored on to Queenscliff keeping on the inside of Governor Reef and close to land.

We arrived and berth at Queenscliff by about 7.30 pm. There we were welcomed by John in his Red Jacket and Leigh (marinated) on shore with his Sorcerer 21 behind his van.

As I was only wearing the wet weather jacket during the sail, my legs were soaking wet I was very cold, so I was glad for the hot shower at the nearby amenities block.

We left Queenscliff for Werribee about 7.30 the next morning. At that time there was little wind, Helen and I decided to motor sail to ensure that when the predicted strong southerlies hit we'd be as close to our destination as possible. We left the motor ticking over adding about 3 knots to our speed until we were perhaps 3 nautical miles off Werribee. We turned the motor off and then sailed on. At first there wasn't much wind but it soon built up. We sailed and tried to fish (trawling) for about half an hour. Then the wind picked up and we sailed around the vicinity of Werribee for about an hour in about 10 to 15 knots winds before the storm hit. Storm clouds rolled in from the South West and soon the ominous signs told us we should get into the river. As we were sailing up and down the coast in front of the river we soon were in the Werribee river channel so all was good. We arrived at Werribee about 2.30 pm. There as we were retrieving we saw a small fleet of beautiful wooden yachts, part of the Wooden Boats Club, getting ready to sail in the river.

In summary, we had a great weekend despite all the doom and gloom of the forecast. We timed every step to be just ahead of any serious weather patterns. We did this in the best of sailing company with people whom we met on the TrailerSailerPlace forum. They were:

Madmission - Shane (Boomerang 20) (Colac)
Brian - (Seaweeds) South Coast 22 (Geelong)
John - Red Jacket (magic232) (Indented Heads)
Leigh - Sorcerer 21 ((Stawell)

If they would let us we would sail with these guys anytime. They were the best of company and very confident sailors indeed.

The moral is that is, "If you can go to a cruise than go ahead despite the weather. You can adjust the sail plan to ensure safety when you are there." We did and it was a terrific weekend. Picture below shows us leaving Queenscliff.

Ed & Helen
Wanton C22/110