



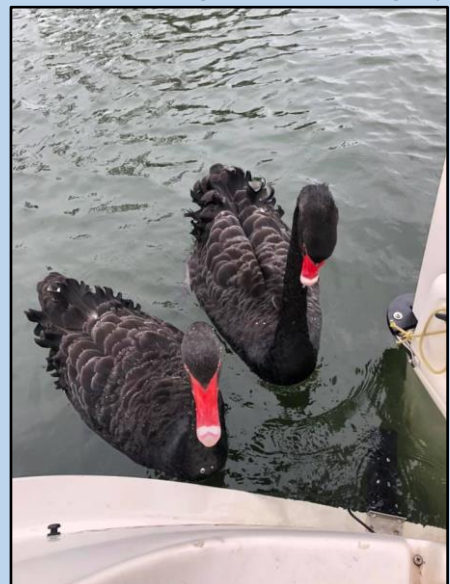
Gippsland Lakes Cruise

14th to 29th February 2020 By Graeme and Charmain on “Crosswind”
and John and Lisa Pateman on “Humm Along”

The Gippsland Lakes is the largest network of waterways in Australia and is made up of Wellington Lake, Lake Victoria, Reeve Lake and Lake King and are more than 400sq km in size. Several coastal lagoons and seven rivers: the Latrobe, Avon, Nicholson, Tambo, Mitchell, Macalister and Thomson Rivers.

The lakes are all joined, providing water access to all of the lakes and rivers from any launching location in the system. The McMillan Strait is a body of water running roughly north-south between Paynesville and Raymond Island and is centrally located in the lake system, Paynesville being one of the more predominant villages. The open ocean of Bass Strait is at the town of Lakes Entrance allowing access to the 90 Mile Beach.

The Lakes are a haven for an abundance of wildlife, including large numbers of beautiful black swans. They should have called the lakes Swan Lakes! Boating facilities are exceptional here. Shame on you Lake Macquarie!



Gippsland Ports make it easy for mariners to understand time limits in place at all public berthing areas by a system of colour coding. There is definitely no shortage of jetties, mooring and other facilities wherever you go around the lake system. The time limits are rarely observed unless busy.

Friday 14.2.2020 Crosswind (Graeme & Charmain) set sail on her course along the tarmac at 10.30am, one hour behind Only Time (Kevin & Gaylene). Both captains choosing to steer a course via the coastal waters for muster at Paynesville on the Gippsland Lakes by Monday. Crosswind chased Only Time all day, losing her wind at Batemans Bay where she decided to moor for the night.

Saturday 15.2.2020 An early rise and a brisk wind in Crosswind's sails, she caught Only Time at Waldron's Swamp to continue voyage their voyage in tandem. Sometimes, deeply saddened by the far-reaching devastation of the recent bush fire. Then to have our spirits lifted on seeing the lush green fields, after the recent rains of the areas unaffected by the fires. Mother Nature, ensuring lots of happy cows and the continuance of cheese production. Again, Crosswind lost her wind by the time she arrived at Lakes Entrance, while Only Time met up with Gypsea (Phil & Kim, after repairing a trailer flat tyre) and continued to Paynesville. Both Gypsea and Only Time where able to forewarn Crosswind, Scallywag, Humm Along and Free Spirit NOT to use the exit out of Bairnsdale via the low bridge underpass!



Sunday 16.2.2020 After scraping the kangaroo off their car, Robert, Sybil and Scallywag arrived at Paynesville just ahead of Crosswind. We all rigged, helped each other launch and move to the berths at the Paynesville Yacht Club for the night. Hot showers and a welcome meal at the pub were equally enjoyed by all. So far, the weather has been cooler, cloudy and drizzly. Temperature has been between 16°-26° daily. Winds predominantly from the SE, between 10-20knts.

Monday 17.2.2020 We left Paynesville at 10am for the commencement of our adventure through the western part of the lakes....and what an adventure it turned out to be! We called in to Duck Arm (a little cove not far from Paynesville), so we could remember goods spots to stay later in our travels. As we exited, Only Time appeared to be having trouble with the foresail luffing about and out of control. Soon after Kevin radioed that they ran aground hard, Gaylene fell across the traveller cutting her shin and her face hitting the companion way chipping 4 teeth and cutting her lip! Ouch! Once the situation was under control, Kevin and Gaylene returned to Paynesville for medical and dental assistance.

Gypsea, Crosswind and Scallywag continued across Lake Victoria past Loch Sport (a village on the coastal side of the lake with access to 90 Mile Beach), to Hollands Landing. Hollands Landing is the entrance to McLennan River which is the passage way to Lake Wellington. We had planned to stay the night just at the end of the river on the edge of Lake Wellington, however, due to windy conditions we retreated back into the river to Seacombe Jetty and nosed in with the mosquitoes and midges. In doing so Scallywag's stays caught up in over hanging trees requiring a rescue mission. Not to worry, still plenty of time for sundowners and entertainment from the very playful Burrunan dolphins, who permanently reside in the Gippsland Lakes.

Tuesday 18.2.2020 *We crossed Lake Wellington under motor through maximum depths of only 3 meters. The mozzies and march flies also came along for the journey to Marley Point and the Lake Wellington Yacht Club. After checking out the facilities, we made our way back across Lake Wellington passing those playful dolphins again. Lake Wellington is a large lake, taking 2 hours to motor across, following the port makers all the way. Not too much to see here, but at least we can say we did it...thanks Phil!!*

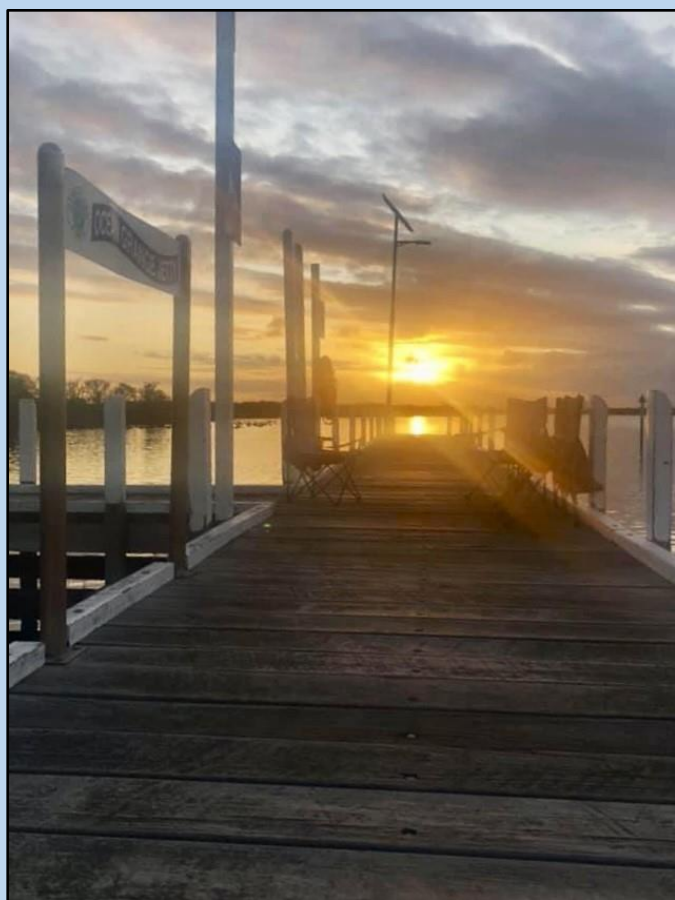
A slow journey back through the McLennan River, trying to get to Loch Sport, so we could be secured to the jetty before the chasing storm. Phew! Made it just in time to manage a short, but sweet, sundowners together. A mad dash back to the boats as the light rain suddenly turned into thunder and lightning and the heavens opening up above us. A bumpy, wild night!



Wednesday 19.2.2020 *Cold, rainy, windy miserable weather conditions held us captives at Loch Sport for the day. We did, however, get to enjoy the hospitality of the Loch Sport Sailing Club. Pleasant conversation and deliciously hot showers! During breaks in the weather, walking getting to know the village held back the cabin fever. Then, of course, the obligatory dinner at the pub, pick up and return by courtesy bus.*

Meanwhile, back in Paynesville....Gaylene was repaired, resting and preparing to set sail asap. Free Spirit (Barry & Kathy) arrived with a broken motor mounting bracket which needed repairs before they could set sail.

Thursday 20.2.2020 Improvements to weather conditions, allowed the Loch Sport contingent to make their way back to Paynesville to regroup, enjoy the town facilities, take the 5 minute vehicle and passenger ferry trip across the McMillan Strait to Raymond Island and explore the Koala Trail. In 1953, koalas were relocated from Phillip Island to Raymond Island to try and replenish their dwindling numbers. The experiment worked and the population growing ever since.



Friday 21.2.2020 It was decided, Gypsea, Only Time and Scallywag would head off to Ocean Grange not too far from Paynesville with entry via a narrow channel through a meandering system of port and starboard marks. Ocean Grange is on the coastal side of the Gippsland Lakes with access to the 90 Mile Beach and consists of a public jetty, a small group of holiday houses including historic homestead. Built in 1889 and beautifully maintained it is now for sale, if anyone is interested! Indeed, a pleasant place to stay.

Crosswind would stay at Paynesville with Free Spirit until its motor mounting bracket was repaired. Unfortunately, the repair took longer than originally promised, so

Crosswind made her way to join the others at Ocean Grange. Free Spirit would stay in Paynesville to await the completion of the repair and the arrival of Humm Along (John & Lisa) on Saturday. This is the weekend Paynesville hosts their Music Festival, so there was that bit of extra to do for those waiting there, not to mention great coffee shops and a bit of boutique shopping.

Saturday 22.2.2020 Those at Ocean Grange left the jetty for an explore up Bunga Arm which is bound by the Boole Poole Peninsula and the coastal strip of the 90 Mile Beach allowing various spots to access the beach. Gypsea and Only Time chose to stern in, walk to the beach and enjoy a picnic lunch.

Crosswind decided she needed to shake the sails out, so she headed back out the channel to the other side of the Boole Poole Peninsula and Raymond Island to

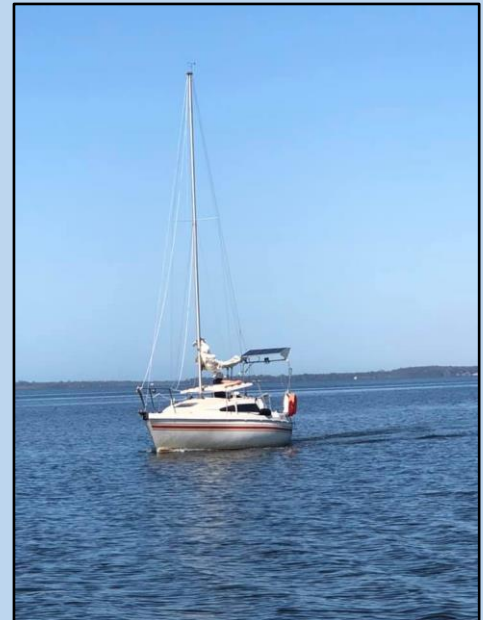
enjoy a brisk sail to Lake King, planning to meet up with everyone else back at Paynesville to collect Humm Along and Free Spirit. Scallywag decided to motor along while Crosswind sailed. Unfortunately, Scallywag's keel cable snapped during the trip and slowly made her way to a service jetty at Paynesville to pull out and temporary repair by Phil....to the rescue again!



Meeting up with Free Spirit and Humm Along we planned to head to Duck Arm Cove to stern in for the night. Crosswind sailed again, but this time not through choice...motor problems! We did make it though and sundowners shared with others also staying in the cove.

Sunday 23.2.2020 *Sailing back to Paynesville, Crosswind and Scallywag tied to the jetty waiting for necessary repairs to take place on Monday morning. NOW OVER TO YOU, HUMM ALONG.....*

Saturday 22.2.2020 *Lisa and I arrived at Paynesville late Saturday morning and met Kathy and Barry at the IGA after having gone to the wrong boat ramp. Barry assisted with the launch at the jetty and as I attempted to motor away from the jetty there was plenty of froth but no forward movement. Whilst the captain was parking the car the crew decided that Barry would go with us so we knew where to tie up with Free Spirit. Only the Captain didn't know what was going on. (as Barry was trying to hold the boat to get on.)*



Heading to Duck Arm Cove for the night we didn't realize this would be the only night the whole group would be together. Two yachts were already enjoying Duck Arm when our 6 yachts raided. They joined us for happy hour and had some interesting sailing yarns.

John and Helen from Geelong on their Noalex, joined our company over the next few nights and were very informative in their conversations with us as they knew the Gippsland area well.





Sunday 23.2.2020 The morning was very calm, and it was a beautiful day. Too light for sailing we headed north to Barrier Landing. Blindly following Gypsy and looking at the views, at one point it got very shallow. On the way back on another day I noticed we had missed observing a navigation marker.

Barrier landing had a great Jetty with a short walk to the beach. The lake water was warmer than I expected, and I didn't notice jelly fish here. Some of us had a little swim, I was tempted.

Monday 24.2.2020 We headed to Lakes Entrance in the morning to restock and get fresh prawns direct from the

trawler. Lisa and I went for a pleasant 1.8km walk for a hot shower and we all regrouped at Flagstaff. Flagstaff had another great jetty and the Lakes Entrance where the seals were entertaining us. Barry cleaned the electric BBQ that was filthy and we were all set for happy hour and a BBQ dinner. Unfortunately, a storm hit so that was the end of that. Kevin and Phil still used the BBQ with an umbrella.



Tuesday 25.2.2020 We headed to Metung to meet up with Crosswind, where we had an explore of the area on land and hot showers. In the evening we hitched a free ride to the pub with Crosswind who was conveniently staying on the jetty at the pub. We enjoyed our dinner and nice views and got back to our yachts after some brief showers.

Wednesday 26.2.2020 With strong wind forecast we sailed down to the

Tambo River with furling jibs used to partly sail up the river (if you had one). Swan Reach jetty was very protected from the strong wind and had, on first impressions, an average looking pub. However, the steak sandwich Lisa and I had was the best and largest I had ever seen. We stayed at Swan Reach over night after enjoying happy hour and an entertaining "spot the car game" in our chairs on the jetty, as we were so protected.

Thursday 27.2.2020 The wind had dropped a fair bit and we headed back down the Tambo River to Johnsonville Landing jetty. The jetty had very good new facilities that were kept very clean and looked after by the locals. Back in Lake King Crosswind shook out his sails while we went via McMillan Strait (Paynesville) to Ocean Grange. A canopy of trees at Ocean Grange was spectacular and a 130-year-old historic homestead which was for sale, was worth a look. Margy and Paul Dougherty, most of us knew from the Clarence River Classic in Grafton, were down here for the Marlay Point Overnight Race, joined us for a very enjoyable social evening on the shore. We had a bit of a windy night, but we were being pushed away from the jetty, so it wasn't too bad.



Friday 28.2.2020 Paynesville was hosting a biennial classic wooden boat rally on this weekend and as a result, no jetty berths were available. So, we all had our yachts on trailers by mid- afternoon and some of us checked out the wooden boats displayed. We enjoyed our last meal and evening together at a local restaurant.

Saturday 29.2.2020 We all made our way home with some of us watching the flotilla sail down the McMillan Strait. We thoroughly enjoyed our week exploring the beautiful Gippsland Lakes.

Thanks Phil and Kim for inviting us all and leading a memorable trip

