



Clarence River Cruise

9th to 15th May 2021 By Ken and Tania “Aye-Sea Red”

Saturday. *Our biggest drive towing a boat was this 5 hour drive to Grafton to meet up with the flotilla for a BBQ dinner at the clubrooms of the Grafton Sailing Club and meet Vinnie, a very friendly Skye Terrier belonging to Paul and Catriona on Anchovy. We all camped on the trailed boats below the club house by the river.*

Sunday - Grafton to Brushgrove

After a hot BBQ breakfast, the slippery mud on shore made launching a team effort & we stored our cars and trailers in the lockup compound. We noticed how muddy the river still was after

the big flood only a month before. As there was no wind we motored to our overnight stop at Brushgrove, watching

John & Lisa on their 1st big trip on Wanderer. Only Time anchored alongside us in the river, with the other boats on the jetty. Group dinner at the Brushgrove Pub with lots of laughter with Barry and Cathy and all, and then the heavens opened up!! Crews rushing across the bridge, & we motored the tender past Kev quickly rowing Gaylene back to Only Time through the rain.



Monday – Brushgrove to MacLean.
Woke up, looked out the window & “Holy Heck, Kev’s dragged his anchor! No wait, Only Time’s tied up to Enchantress at the jetty”. Gypsea led the flotilla to Munro Island for lunch. When we were going across to Lawrence to get a few supplies, I noticed a pontoon on the tender seemed a bit soft and getting softer, she’ll be right!



Underway, and next time I turned around, the tender transom was coming off due to one pontoon had gone flat and the weight of outboard! Radioed an alert to the fleet, then I jumped on the tender and threw a rope around the outboard, Kev jumped on to Eye-Sea Red and helped Tania drag the tender on-board. Thanks to all! Then Tania went to go into the cabin, twang, her back went!! Then onto MacLean with boats tying up on both jetty's, thanks to the team for getting us onto the jetty as Tania couldn't move. John & Lisa had dinner with John's uncle, I found my Clan MacLeod tartan decorated power pole, and a number of us went to the Chinese restaurant for a yummy dinner, great banter and lots of laughter!



Tuesday MacLean to Yamba

Woke up to a huge log washed gently up against Enchantress. There was a bit of wind so we all raised sails, and as the Harwood road bridge was scheduled to be lifted at noon, Tania did a man overboard drill with a fender, as it was her 1st time on Aye-Sea Red's tiller, pity that the fender was run over a couple of times! Then as we had all arrived at the bridge with an hour to go, all boats did the Trailer-Sailer ballet waiting for the bridge to raise. I had to lower the main quickly and start the outboard when I tacked downstream instead of upstream and the current was stronger than the wind, taking us towards the bridge pylons!

Kim and Phil led us through in a grand parade then we all motored into Iluka behind the breakwall to have a look, and then back upstream to enter the Yamba entrance against the outgoing tide; the 5 hp did well didn't it Pete and Jacquie! Now, who was it that found out just how shallow it was?

We had a group dinner at Yamba Shores Tavern right on the water, again with great banter. Yamba is a beautiful town and there is lots to explore & enjoy in the laid back seaside town.

Wednesday in Yamba

We decided to give Tania's back a bit of a stretch so walked into Yamba to look around the shops, had a nice lunch, saw different crews doing the same thing. Tania and I walked around the headland & up to the lighthouse and then had a shandy at the Pacific Hotel with fantastic views of the river mouth and ocean! We all decided to spend a 2nd night in Yamba.

Thursday Yamba to Iluka

Watched the big hoist lift Doug and Robyn's Blew By You out of the water and drop it lower it gently on the stuck centreboard to push it back up the case. Off we all went across to Iluka and we all got to tie up onto the jetty. After a kilo of fresh prawns, Tania and I explored the World Heritage listed Rainforest Walking Track, & Illuka Bluff lookout and dipped our legs into the water. Barry decided he was going to catch the bus back to Grafton to get his car & trailer as the outboard wasn't going into idle and he had no control over Free Spirit. It was sad to see Barry and Cathy head off back to Newcastle.

We had freshly caught fish, n chips for dinner on Aye-Sea Red then up to the pub to have a few drinks with the flotilla.



Friday Iluka to Munro Island

Again, we passed under the Harwood Bridge on our way to Munro Island. We all tied up to the beach and soon the bonfire was roaring for Happy Hour. Next minute, mad scramble to shift the fire as the tide was coming in! Doug has quite a knack for getting fires going. Quote of the night "do you think this is above high tide mark?" as the water lapped against our chair legs.





Saturday

Motored from Munro Island to the historic river port town of Ulmarra for lunch at the great Ulmarra Hotel on the river bank. Then everyone wandered through the village looking at the local art galleries, antique, brick-a-brack and ice cream shops!

A nice easy motor back up to Grafton, and again a great team effort to get the boats out and start to derig. Big thanks to Doug and Robin for getting the Pizza as they wouldn't deliver for some reason.

A big thanks to Phil and Kim for a fantastic trip from all of us!! It has made us want to do the Clarence River Race next time, it sounds like a great event to put onto the calendar

