

Lake Macquarie Jetty ***'Training' Cruise*** **Feb 21-22 Saturday- Sunday**

Saturday-

This was a cruise on the lake we were looking forward to, an opportunity to discover some of the good jetties that have facilities and eateries we could enjoy. However the weather was not looking too convincing from our end, with dark clouds and rain over the lake. After some umming and ahing and a quick phone call we decided why not, it will be fun.

We arrived at Styles and after chatting with Tom rigged the boat and joined the line to launch. Already in the water Kim & Phil (Sailaway) Mark, Corenne and Odette (Farrgo), Hans & Anita (Gemanic) Neville & Judy (Wanderer II), Brian & Val (Only Time) who had arrived the night before and Derek & Leanne (Melanie). Tom and his girls were in his dinghy for the day due to work being carried out on Moonlight's keel case. John & myself in Humm- along, made it eight boats for the day. All securely tied to the jetty Phil began with a quick explanation of the day planned ahead, followed by a discussion on appropriate rope tying including using a springer line to secure the boat alongside a jetty. We also had a demonstration on how to manoeuvre your boat from a wharf using the prop walk.



Due to the time, a decision was made to go directly to the public wharf at Toronto for lunch, rather than head to F jetty, for some fine tuning of techniques to use when tying off at a jetty. This was to come, especially for John & myself! One by one, we departed the jetty and motored out through Kilaben Bay. At this stage the clouds weren't looking too bad. In fact the blue sky was doing its best to make an appearance. John and I continued to motor while we observed a few boats chose to sail. Tom and his girls meanwhile motored around us all taking a few snap shots for the newsletter.

After a while the monotonous drone of the motor got the better of John, and he decided to hoist the sails for a more relaxing peaceful cruise around Coal Pt, out into the bay. As the Toronto boats were racing we decided to take a wide birth to avoid interfering in their race before tacking towards Toronto. At this stage the wind was good and we especially enjoyed this leg of the cruise.

Closer to Toronto the wind dropped so we decided to motor the rest of the way in. Approaching the public jetty, we took a wide arc without any dramas and with the assistance of those on the wharf to catch the ropes and fend off any sudden lurching toward the jetty, we motored in. Being on the east side of it though proved to be a little rocky, with the wind blowing across the lake. So the springer rope proved its worth by securing the boat. Neville demonstrated his wisdom by tying off on the west side of Jetty!

With everyone tied off securely to the wharf, it was time for lunch. Or for some of us to ditch the lunch prepared, as the lure of hot chips on the wharf was too great! I myself, was hanging out for a lovely Chai Latte from the delicious café across the road! Having been there on

previous occasions I knew the coffee was great. Barbara and Bernd (Blew By U) met up with the group at Toronto as they had been delayed due to unfortunate vandalism on their boat the night before.

Again clouds were looming, and looking across & down the lake, rain was on the approach. For the night, the plan was to tie off at the jetty or anchor on shore at Valentine. A table had been reserved for us at the bowling club there, so the night was going to be an easy, no cooking, social evening. That's my kind of weekend! When ready, we all made our own way across to Valentine.

However, at Valentine the jetty was full due to the charity splash being held there on the weekend, so we all anchored on shore. At this point in the afternoon, Tom and his girls departed for Styles before the day got away. Shortly afterwards, happy hour was set up on the grass. Raincoats came out in an attempt to scare away the threatening showers around us and for a time this technique appeared to keep the sprinkles at bay. Until Hans decided to take his raincoat off which triggered more sprinkles, at which point he was promptly told to put it back on!

At 6 we made our way over to the bowling club for tea and drinks. A lovely evening was had by us all, socialising until the charity splash mob decided to invade with their karaoke juke box and serenade us all! Some of us decided to call it a night and departed for their boats. We decided to hang about a bit for the amusement. Either way, the Charity Splash mob appeared to be having a great time for a good cause and in fact one of the girls had a lovely voice and I could have listened to her all night. After a while we had had enough of being amused and returned to the peace of our boat.

Sunday-

Sunday we awoke to the sound of bagpipes! Such was our peaceful slumber. It had rained a couple of times during the night, but the lake was beautifully glassy in the morning and at least it wasn't raining for breakfast. Events on the lake at Croudace Bay were being organised and with the charity splash mob setting sail from the jetty, the place was quite a buzz with activity. We all enjoyed a relaxing breakfast and before long, Phil was making a move to tie up on the jetty. One by one the rest of our fleet followed and before we knew it, we thought we had better take up our spot on the jetty too.



Now at this point, hindsight is a wonderful thing. I should have just finished that cup of coffee! Except for making some minor adjustments to the ridiculously long, always tangled tie off rope with a sharp knife and flame, this simple manoeuvre to the jetty should not have been too difficult or take too long. Or so we had thought!

The wind was calm and it was not raining. So over we went, approaching

the jetty a couple of times, finally bow was in and a tie off of sorts was managed, so with a bit of fiddling, surely we could manage to get the stern in and tie off.



Well, (sorry Phil) he had other ideas and this was a great learning opportunity to practice some manoeuvring and docking techniques in order to manage this task more effectively and efficiently. Next minute, we were untied and out we went for another attempt, to do it better!

Long story short, we broke the record for the longest attempt to dock at a jetty! Keel up, keel down; slow the approach, try a different angle; rudder up rudder down; drive with motor, don't drive with motor; go forward, no reverse; turn, turn more; too much drift, look out, fend off that boat!

Oh my goodness! And these weren't my choice of words! My feathers were getting ruffled, I was getting wet as it had started to rain and my coffee was getting cold! And meanwhile we had an amused audience watching us!

With that, we decided to leave the jetty, away from obstacles, so John could sort the boat out and eventually do it his way. Either way, I just wanted to get in, so after some de-ruffling of feathers, we managed our way back to another side of the jetty. Tying off we finally settled. Wow, what a lesson, I can tick that one off, it's a learning experience that's for sure.



Calm restored, the plan for the rest of the day was to head off to Lake Macquarie Yacht Club for lunch, John's old stomping ground when he use to sail with his father as a teenager. Everyone left to motor down, John and I stayed a bit to tidy up. Too late for that coffee though! We caught up with the rest of the fleet at lunch time, docking at the LMYC with thankfully no dramas!

A lovely lunch was had. Sitting on the covered wharf restaurant as the rain again came down. After lunch, Anita and Hans said goodbye and

the rest of us motored over to take a look at the 16 Footers Club jetty, before we all too motored back to Styles. Of course the sun was well and truly out at this stage as we all de-rigged and retrieved the boats.

What a lovely social, fun, learning weekend we'd had, with a great bunch and like-minded people. So to finally end, did we learn anything? Yes, heaps and have gained more confidence. Did we have fun? Yes always. Would we do it again? yes, already looking forward to our next trip!!

Thanks Phil and Kim for organising a great weekend !!