

Gippsland Lakes Cruise 2016.

The plan was to start the journey down to Paynesville Friday night 4th March. But of course we bought another boat, a Cobra 16ft catamaran (a whole other story) and it was in Mt Gambier SA. An exercise in musical towing commenced meaning we ended up towing the Ross over Mt Hotham (no snow this time). Crazy really but all went to plan and we arrived in Paynesville Monday 7th.

We discovered, a few days before we left, Paynesville was hosting a classic boat regatta on the first weekend and they expected a few hundred boats. We missed the event and was told Paynesville was humming and well worth an addition to plans next year.

The weather was glorious which was of concern as Tom and the girls were to join us the following weekend, after the Marley Point race, and we wanted the glorious weather then. March is the best time to host an event in VIC as the month with the least rain, BUT it is VIC. We visited our usual spots to make sure nothing had changed before we showed off our old cruising ground.

Paynesville – Berthed in the main street and bought provisions.

Picnic Arm – ‘Our’ mooring was empty and we settled into a night of serenity. Time for a swim and to forget about work.

Box Creek – Yep still the best spot to hide from rough weather.



Lakes Entrance – I whooped Brian at Putt Putt golf. Fresh fish and chips on the foreshore and time to re-supply.

Back to Paynesville- Strip the boat, crack out the race sails and prepare for race day tomorrow after our crew arrives.

We completed Marley Point race before Sunday breakfast and were very pleased to see the K-Man holding down a prize pozzy in the centre of Paynesville. Tom and the girls were enjoying watching race entrants come home over the finish line- in the RAIN. Hmm VIC weather strikes again. But wait it is VIC and weather changed again..After some running repairs on the Ross' rudder box (we ran aground in the race) we sailed across to Nicholson River to berth overnight on the jetty. The girls enjoyed the playground and we all finished with a walk across the road to the pub for a great meal.

The plan was to show Tom the main hiding spots and geographical highlights to wet his appetite to explore another trip. One week down here and you only scrape the surface of what's on offer.

We (minus Brian) drank coffee in Metung whilst Brian chaperoned the girls on the adventure playground. Then we ventured up into Chinaman's



creek for a look see and to point out the hidden public jetty. Stayed overnight in Box Creek, stern into the beach, deep enough that any skeg boat would have their stern beached... Tom and the girls played with the fluorescence that night after running repairs to charge batteries.



We took Tom on a navigational exercise into Lakes Entrance in the pouring rain – white out. Stay close Tom we have the chart plotter... Guess who couldn't find the raincoats !! Tom replaced his batteries ☺. Next day tide going out and we dashed across to the alternate route back to Metung. The tide grabbed the Ross' stern and we fairly glided across. Tom was pre-warned.

We sailed on to Steamers Landing through Aurora channel. The wind picked up as it does after 2pm. We had kept a watchful eye on the

weather as it can turn very nasty very quickly if you're not watching. We made it into the channel but not before Tom lost a solar panel to the wind (I'll let Tom elaborate on this one).



Berthed at Steamers out of the wind, we strolled down the beach picking up shells and then Tom and the girls explored the enclosed waters.



The next day we sailed down and picked up 'our' mooring at Picnic Arm for lunch, a swim and fed the swans. Then we sailed back closer to Paynesville to stay overnight at Safety Cove for another swim, a spot of snorkeling, another playground and Tom went prawning to all hours of the night.



The weather was expecting to get very nasty the next day and Brian wanted us off the water early. 7am we're heading off to the ramp to get the boats off the water- then to have breakfast. Expecting squalls of 40 plus knots and it didn't disappoint- whoopa. We hid a few years ago in Box Creek, no worries with 58 knot squalls, just relaxing in the calm waters. Plenty of beautiful spots down there to hull down if needed.

So many side stories that will just have to wait for a Happy Hour... ☺

Brian and Valerie
Only Time