

Australia Day

'Wandering' Cruise

January 25th to 28th 2019



By John and Jenny Avery "Windsor castle"

Back in January Jenny and I looked at the forecast of several further hot days approaching and thought that the NHTYA January long weekend cruise was just the thing to get us away from Windsor's western Sydney heat.

Keen to test our new front gates and new carport relocation avoidance apparatus, we prepared Windsor Castle Friday evening, and just after midnight opened the new front gates and stealthily towed our much-loved Castle 650 out onto Macquarie Street. Our street is quite busy. If you look at a street directory you will see that Macquarie Street is regarded by the mapmakers as the northern-most part of ring road "9", linking Windsor to Campbelltown via Sydney's outer western suburbs. Therefore, to get our boat out of its carport in our front yard, we tend to make our move just after midnight, when the traffic is less likely to be stressed by a slow-moving 4WD and trailer yacht at right angles to their path. Then back to bed, for some sleep before dawn.

Saturday dawned, 2 hour drive, Styles Point, Windsor Castle rigged, launched, car and trailer locked, let's go sailing. Several cruisers have already camped out on the Lake Friday night, enjoyed music over the water up Warners Bay way. Saturday morning, we meet up over at the "Sand Islands" off Swansea (Spectacle Island, Swan Bay, Elizabeth Island, Pelican Island) - very pleasant indeed, with cool clear water, plenty of sunshine and the opportunity for some swimming practice just to keep level with the boat – quite a current flowing over the shallows. Jen makes lunch out of the esky. Charmain & Graeme from Crosswind come over and welcome us, and as cruise directors produce a 5 page, 60 question exam for me to complete. Crikey!, I think, I haven't done an exam in decades, and I came here for a restful break. I look around and don't see anyone else sweating over their exams.

Lisa & John on Humm Along arrived and put the mast up and rigged the boat on the water. I thought that was pretty classy. Jacquie & Peter were there on Enchantress, Judy & Neville with Wanderer II. Judy enjoyed swimming in the current. Tai in his McGregor Dream Horizon, Sandra & David with Ice Dancer. Gaylene & Kevin on About Time – a rope was rigged from their stern across to Kim & Phillip's Sail Away. This gave everyone something to grab in the current, but also discouraged jet skis from buzzing through. Remember the old black and white afternoon TV westerns, horse and rider galloping along the trail, a horizontal rope between two trees, horse goes under the rope, horse leaves the rider behind. Everyone enjoyed the cool water, acting half their age.

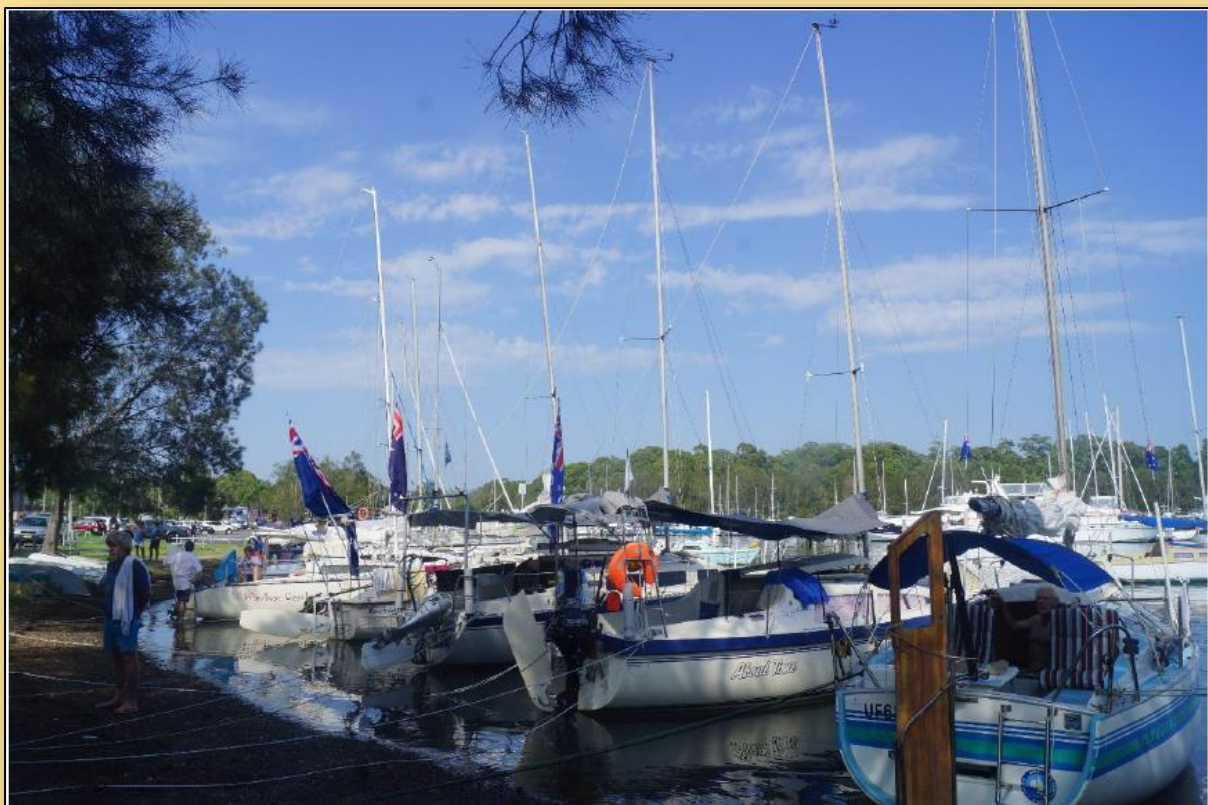
With the promise of fireworks Saturday night, we cruised north to Marmong and put the stern onto the beach just inside the Cove. Dinner that night was a competitive affair, with several of the world's smallest (and in some cases slowest) BBQs being fired up to cook a selection of sausages, rissoles, but only 6 steaks. I think Windsor Castle won the prize for slowest BBQ, with the lion's share of the cooking being by Kevin and Graeme. At Marmong Cove we met up with Robyn & Doug on Blue By U, their lovely Gazelle, and with Leanne & Derek (to whom we owe a big thank you for sharing with us). So, with Tai, Lisa & John, Jacquie & Peter, Judy & Neville, Kim & Phillip, Sandra & David, Charmain & Graeme, Robyn & Doug, Gaylene & Kevin, Leanne & Derek, and Jenny & John.

Marmong Point was the high point of the cruise, numbers- wise. I was beginning to think about the exam, when was I going to cram for it, maybe I could avoid it completely (like I used to at school). How could Charmain and Graeme do such a thing to me – an exam! Oh well, try to forget about it for the moment. Fireworks tonight at Speers point, we have front row seats. A great show, then a quiet night. I slept like a baby.

Next morning Tai asked if I had been bothered by the southerly change that came through during the night. I had not even stirred, but I did point out that his big McGregor was a pretty good windbreak for my little Castle. Thanks again to Leanne & Derek (we appreciated you sharing with us), and the fleet gradually headed out of Marmong Cove, bound for Green Point and a promised swim. Jenny and I spent some time dreamily studying some of the yachts in the marina. Maybe one day we will Sail Away and do some Wandering of our own. So what model sabre did he have? My mind had been mulling over the exam, and this was question 4. Obviously, a question about Sabre trailer yachts, and what did “he” consider whilst

Wandering” around considering if “he” should “Sail Away”. Obviously, the question related to P. Sparkes, and his previous TY, a Sabre 22. Aha, I knew this, however I had not yet come to grips with the mind behind the question. For question 4 could only be answered correctly if you understood the relationship with question 2 (and knew the answer to it!). Question 4 I did not answer correctly, for the model sabre was in fact a model 1796 sabre pattern, and the “he” was in fact Mr Jonathon Warner, whose name was given to Warner’s Bay in question 2. Hmm..

During the cruise from Marmong Point to Frying Pan Bay, I had time to study Charmain’s exam. I began to realise that, before I could answer many of the questions, I needed to understand how Charmain thinks. So, if the answer to a question was not bleedingly obvious, or in some cases was bleeding obvious, I needed to ask myself, what would Charmain think? What was she really asking? “Let’s head off and make a spectacle of ourselves while we swan around with Betty amongst the pelicans. It is here we will meet up with those putting in on Saturday morning. Name the four places that describe this meeting area.” Hmm..



Robyn & Doug in Blue By U headed south to their mooring. We saw their Gazelle later in the day, a lovely yacht. Most everyone pulled in at Green Point for a swim, and Jenny and I arrived after our yacht dreaming just in time to catch up for the sail across to Wangi. This was very exciting, as the Adams 10 fleet was lining up for an event. They are such a graceful yacht, with lovely sail plan and hull. One day when I grow up.... says Windsor Castle. So, "what bay do we pass that always has a large group of people?, and what does "Fl Y 2.5s" mean? Next stop was Wangi on the south side, where the water was warm, and the day was really hot. Lunch, a swim, more swims, a walk to find an ice cream shop, more swims. The exam had moved onto counting cardinal marks, but cleverly, also counting chimneys. I got the marks, but missed the chimneys –very clever Charmain! And we were supposed to collect something for additional points to "show and tell" at sundowners. Given that I really needed a pass in this exam, and I had bombed out on the chimneys, I kept in my mind to find something to present.

Next we headed south, past the cardinal markers off Point Wolstoncroft. Guess what, after we were well past them, I saw the question about what colours are various cardinal marks. We came back to check – got that one right! Tai sailed Dream Horizon all day Sunday, kept everyone in sight, enjoyed his sailing without the motor fumes. Down to Frying Pan Bay everyone sailed, answering questions along the way. I was really getting into this exam thing. I was beginning to see the cunning in Charmain's questions and appreciate the time and thought that had been put into the exam. I was enjoying myself. "We will now head to a point where the sun always shines brightly on the waters and hopefully, we won't get cooked here", or how about "Adam and Eve's modesty tree."

With so many yachts on the cruise, and the forecast of more weather from the south, Frying Pan Bay was not going to hold us all, so Judy and Neville's experience came into play, and we sailed north around Fig Tree Point via Sunshine, and put the stern into the shore just east of Shingle Splitters Point "Head towards a conspicuous landmark that could be used to make a roof". Here we were well protected from the southerly that came through Sunday night. During Sundowners Charmain marked our exams, and there was much discussion and skulduggery about what answers would be accepted, and the points scored. I had found and caught a cute little crab (named Cecil – he told me so). Cecil was my "show and tell". Later we were entertained by a massive electrical storm, with lightning and thunder, and even a little rain. But snug as a bug in a Castle. And I did let Cecil go back to his world.

Monday, and everyone headed back to their world at their own pace, each yacht choosing its own time to up anchor and sail north again. We delayed the inevitable, as did others, going for another walk along the shore, having a last chat, before drifting back to the ramp, the car, the drive home, the traffic, home, work on Tuesday.... So, is that the real world, or was this? What would Charmain's answer be, I wonder? Thanks Charmain and Graeme for a great cruise, and for the most enjoyable exam I can remember. But, should I keep Wandering around considering if I should Sail Away?

