

# Gippsland Lakes Cruise 2011

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup>

QCYC



The weather forecast afforded us another day in Queenscliff which pleased those visitors from out of town who regard Queenscliff as a destination rather than a port of departure.

There was a suggestion that the fleet remain alongside for 2 weeks with daily viewings of Bass Strait seas on a large flat screen telly. Crew would take it in turns to dress in foul weather gear and hurl buckets of water at each other. Unfortunately for reasons obscure this was dismissed as being against the spirit of the game.

Monday 24<sup>th</sup>

Queenscliff to Cleland Bight

“And the schoolboy with satchel and shining morning face, creeping like a snail unwillingly to school...” The Bard captures the essence of the radio sked at 04.45 perfectly.

A brisk sail in 20-30 knots of S.W. in a confused and lumpy sea saw 6 boats in Cleland Bight and Zen Zatori in Flinders. A pleasant calm anchorage with entertainment provided by athletic youth climbing the sand dune and belting down again on their boogie boards, splashing into to sea like lifeboats loosed from their launching ramps.



Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup>

Cleland Bight to Refuge Cove

More joy and enthusiasm at the 04.45 sked and the fleet motored out into much more pleasant conditions than the previous day. Very light winds gave everyone the chance to fully charge their batteries, phones, computer, etc and heat the water for much looked forward to showers. A bit of breeze provided a very pleasant sail for the final last hour or so into Refuge Cove.

It was all going so well. Beautiful sheltered anchorage, golden sandy beaches, fine dining and the fatal third bottle of wine. Not to mention the port and rum chocolate.

### **Tuesday evening/Wednesday morning**

Something had to give and it did in the form of Alegria, around midnight, hooking her anchor buoy line around her rudder. The assumption is that the boat then pulled the anchor out and Alegria subsequently started dragging. Not realizing what had happened, James and Bronwyn began the process of hauling in the anchor with the view to resetting it. Unfortunately the anchor winch at the bow was no match for the underwater winch at the stern and the prop won as it efficiently snugged the anchor between the prop shaft and hull before expiring. Alegria swifly deployed a stern anchor and James surveyed the underwater chaos. He then attempted to slash his wrists.



Gangajang was surprised to receive a visitor at 01.30, especially one swimming and wearing a pink glove. Mal, being a man of the world, initially thought he was being invited to a party and enthusiastically entered into the spirit of the thing rousing the crew from their bunks and having them search for pink rubber gloves. "We don't want to look out of place", he instructed his bumbling crew. Alas the only party was one of the boarding kind and the next 15 minutes saw Alegria and Gangajang hurriedly inflating dinghies. Dinghies were duly launched and then a very pretty bit of maneuvering was accomplished as the assembled cast and crew brought Alegria alongside to be safely rafted up to Gangajang and all retired at 03.30 hours.

### **Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> Refuge Cove**

The problem was resolved in the morning by a team of divers including Peter, James, and Tim. Youth is not wasted on the young after all. Tim could hold his breath three times longer than his older colleagues and a team effort saw Tim surface triumphant as he cut away the last of the offending line and extricated the anchor from betwixt prop shaft and hull. There was talk of payment for services rendered but it was generally agreed that this would cause social division between the amateurs and professionals.



The rest of the day saw crews relaxing , fishing and walking the many beautiful trails that surround Refuge Cove.

4pm Drinks on the beach and all were filled in on the events of the previous night, and relaxed with nibbles and good wine. Bronwyn decided that she hadn't had enough swimming and elected to take a plunge again fully clothed, which we all viewed with admiration for her love of the water. A large Eagle Ray was spotted cruising up and down the beach as the sun finally slipped over the horizon and crew departed for dinner and a quieter night's sleep.

### **Thursday 27<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Refuge Cove**

Absolutely picture perfect day with crew spending time reading, hiking the trails, swimming in the not too warm crystal clear waters and Gangajang taking off for a look at Sealers Cove and 5 mile beach to find a most alluring anchorage in a little cove on the north western side of Refuge.

4pm Drinks on the beach again. Bronwyn was so enjoying her fully clothed swimming that she decided to follow the tradition and dunk herself again. Mal thinking that this must be fun decided to join in and when clambering out of "Dinky" onto the rocks lost his footing and slowly sank into the water just to keep Bronwyn from having all the fun.

### **Friday 28<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Refuge Cove to Lakes Entrance**

An oar-inspiring morning which gave way to a productive day. An oar that had been lost from Gangajang's dinghy during the night time manoeuvring popped out from behind a rock on the far side of the cove as Mal was carrying out his morning ablutions on the aft of the boat. Conditions looked good for an overnighter to Lakes Entrance with SW 10-15 knot winds and calm seas, just perfect for James and Bronwyn to nurse Alegria to the boat doctor for repairs to the prop and shaft.

6pm saw Alegria set sail followed closely by Extravagance 3. Pau Hana and Gangajang took off at 8pm , leaving behind Papalana and Ventura who had changed their plans.

### **Saturday 29<sup>th</sup>**

#### **Lakes Entrance**

The wind came up a bit in the morning and the increase in speed saw us at the bar earlier than scheduled. After an inspection of the conditions by Mal's brother Rod, who happened to be fishing just inside the bar, the fleet proceeded to push a 3 knot current out of the way and tie up at the marina.

Evening spent at the Lakes Entrance Hotel with all the crew having dinner together on the verandah.



**Sunday 30<sup>th</sup>**

**Lakes Entrance to Metung**

Day of provisioning, cleaning, washing then off to Metung.

“A little learning is a dangerous thing.....”

Another beautiful sunny day and the fleet departed at different times to journey up to Boxer’s creek for lunch and a swim.

Mal’s memory of the channel proved faulty and a short cut turned into a grounding.

After many attempts at trying to be towed off by brother Rod it was decided to give up, have lunch and wait for the tide. Re-invigorated by nourishment and the wish to get to the Metung pub a final attempt was organized. This time the anchor was laid out and with a bit of science and great deal more effort Gangajang was hauled off. Crew concurred it was a truly delightful place to stop for lunch with Swans all around and a nice breeze to cool the 39 degree temperatures.

Dinner and drinks were had on the verandah of the local pub which was excellent and all retired for a good night’s rest.

**Monday 31st January**

**Metung to Paynesville**

James and Bronwyn’s Alegria up on the slips to examine damage....fortunately only damage to prop which was removed and machined. Good sail across Lake King to the Paynesville jetty.

**Tuesday 1st February**

**Paynesville**

Swimming and generally keeping cool with the temperature in the high thirties until the change roared through late in the afternoon bringing gusts over 40 knots. Drinks were had at the yacht club, followed by a Barbeque dinner.

**Wednesday 2nd February**

**Paynesville to Duck Arm**



Gangajang assisted Extravagance 3 in getting off the wharf at Sperm Whale Head. Greg then began to have gear selector issues but we all ended up in the delightful Duck Arm. Andreas from Zen Zatori turned up on a power boat out of the blue and tied up for a beer and chat. This proved fortunate timing. Just as they were leaving the call came from Extravagance 3 that they could no longer engage either forward or reverse. So Andreas’ vessel towed Extravagance 3 to Paynesville.

### **Thursday 3rd February**

#### **Duck Arm to Lakes Entrance via Metung and Chinaman's Creek**

Peaceful night in Duck Arm for the two remaining boats.(Pau Hana had always intended to remain in the lakes for an extended period and had found a permanent berth elsewhere.)

The problem on Extravagance 3 was proving to be more than the gear selection cable and now it looked as if Greg might have to replace the whole gear box, so it was not good news.

Gangajang and Alegria left them to undertake more exploratory surgery and headed down to Lakes Entrance (via Chinaman's Creek for lunch).

### **Friday 4th February**

#### **Lakes Entrance to Refuge Cove**

And then there were two!!!!

Up at 05.15 and heading out with Alegria .Winds were all over the place so spinnakers were up and down, headsails were poled out, jibed and then jibed back. And so it went on until Gangajang dropped the pick at 22.00 hrs with Alegria an hour behind. An expletive was heard from Nick as something wacked into his back in the dark and rain and it turned out to be one of the many mutton birds flying around the entrance to Refuge Cove. A spectacular display of lightning illuminated Alegria's arrival at Refuge cove.



### **Saturday 5th February**

#### **Refuge Cove**

Lay day.

### **Sunday**

#### **6th February Refuge Cove**

Lay day

### **Monday 7th February**

#### **Refuge Cove to Waratah Bay**

A spot of fishing on Gangajang as we rounded the Prom yielded nothing but Barracuda and one eventually became lunch.



Anchored off Great Glennie where indicated on the chart. Depth was 5 metres in clear water with a sand bottom.

On departure Gangajang motored towards the small beach and in about 4 metres of water rounded the outer rock to emerge on the other side. Mooring 'pins' have been set into the inner and outer rocks to facilitate fore and aft mooring in what would be a very sheltered spot. Anchored for the night in Waratah Bay. Cold and overcast

### **Tuesday 8th February**

#### **Waratah Bay to Cleeland Bight**

Good sail and picked up the moorings despite misgivings concerning depths. Many minutes were spent measuring, looking up tidal charts, GPS and other means of measurements to decide if we had enough water at low tide.

### **Wednesday 9th February**

#### **Cleeland Bight to Queenscliff**

Today proved once again that conditions for sailing are only perfect about 5% of the time. You don't want it on the nose. You don't want it right up your clacker. You don't want to be becalmed or blown to pieces and you don't want a sloppy sea, current against you or pouring rain. And you certainly don't want to hit a whale in the middle of the night. So here we were on the last day with sunshine, a following sea and 15-20 knots on the beam. Basically all was right with the world until West Head Gunnery Range announce the commencement of a live firing exercise more or less in our area. In fact we were a couple of miles (we hoped) out of range but just to be sure we ran a one iron up the halyard.

Something worked because Alegria and Gangajang motored through the rip at 1400 hrs with Alegria returning to Brighton and Gangajang turning left to QCYC.



Words and photos by Nick and Pam Truswell

The Scurvy Crew of GANGgajang