

January Mystery Cruise 2021

Nine boats originally booked and indicated they were interested to join this year's event.

Of course, the last six months has played havoc as many boats were not being fully prepared due to less access to achieve maintenance tasks and to be ready.

And once again this year the weather also tried valiantly to break our efforts and spirit, however many boats made it to the bottom of Port Phillip prior to departure. Some of our original 9 boats found the existing weather not so friendly and a few had not managed to stop the gremlins that arise when leaving home port, so we all waited until the 3rd of January to find a weather window suitable to depart.

At this stage we had dropped to six or seven boats looking good to depart. Those who did not leave opted to spend the time inside Port Phillip as they believed that was their best option.

The boats who managed to venture out were Beau Ceil, Level C, Meltemi of Melbourne, Blue Chip, and Sky. Also Sandy Doull on Next Moment. Lino Bresciani and Boba Illik on Sky started prior to New Year and got away prior to the easterlies kicked in.

Beau Ceil, Level C and Meltemi left on the 3rd January and had a day sail to Cat Bay on Phillip Island to anchorage in eight metres of water near a sandy beach with light easterlies and sunny skies. These conditions were not to last, as at 03.00 am the southerly arrived - 30 to 35 knots. Time to move as our anchor was not holding and we were concerned we could drag onto the beach. This is when the anchor decided it would not operate in up motor mode, leaving three crew to manhandle our big plow anchor and 30 metres of chain onto the deck. We then motored out into Westernport channel and using instruments and plotter went around to Cowes through the channel in the blinding rain and darkness. With two starboard channel lights missing or not lit! Fortunately, by daylight we could find a mooring buoy off the Cowes Yacht Club in blinding rain and settled in to dodge the rain and dry off below.

Later in the morning Level C and Beau Ciel joined us at this spot where we were protected by the land.

In the meantime, Next Moment sailed to Bird Rock to anchor overnight and next morning their anchor motor tore itself out of its mounting. This meant a return to Port Phillip rather than heading to Refuge. During the day we received report from Sky, sheltering behind Three Hummocks, and Blue Chip, leaving King Island and returning to Westernport Bay.

Two days of beastly easterlies and solid rain, and on day three we found time to dismantle the anchor winch and clear up the problem allowing us to re-stow the anchor chain and be certain the winch would work again. The local Cowes Yacht Club were helpful and allowed some of us to go ashore for a shower and also pick-up some additional wine, provisions and some ice for cocktails prior to dinner.

All of us decided to leave Wednesday 6th or Thursday 7th to look at conditions to potentially head off to Wilsons Prom or head home.

Beau Ceil headed back to Port Phillip and Level C heading off to the Prom. Meltemi, when leaving Westernport, experienced some damage to the vang point on the boom and the boom failed - cracking right thru - leaving us the only option to lower the mainsail and consider sailing home to Port Phillip under headsail only.

Level C sailed on to the Prom and we sailed into Port Phillip on Thursday afternoon and motored up to Hidden Harbour at Martha Cove to use a pen and sort out the mainsail and clear up the deck. Main points were no one was injured, and the mainsail not damaged.

We left Friday morning to return to RYCV in Williamstown.

Congratulations to Lino and Boba for their trip report and thanks to Howard from Level C for his report of the trip to Refuge as well.

All boats who managed to get out of Port Phillip kept in touch and I am pleased to say although this trip was short, we all experienced different circumstances and all returned to home ports intact.

Mystery Cruise Photos



Level C at Refuge Cove



Level C crew



Meltemi at anchor Cowes



Baking beer bread on Meltemi



Meltemi heading home under headsail



Navigator David on Meltemi

Mystery Cruise Photos (continued)



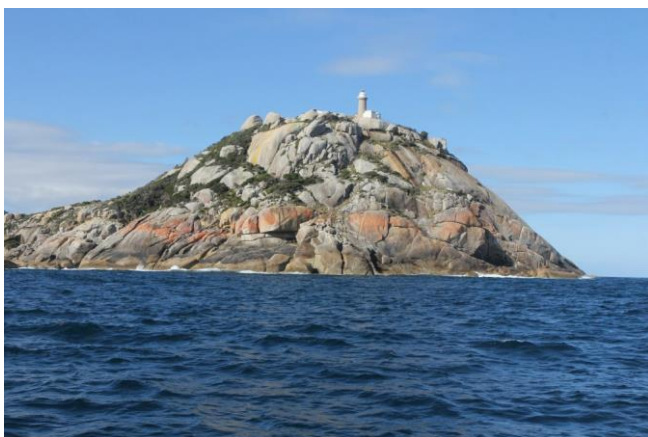
Lobster gift to Sky at Stanley



Sky skipper Lino



Sky crew Boba



Wilson's Prom Lighthouse



Level C crew on beach at Refuge



Ian & Catherine catching up on log on *Meltemi*