



MLAC Bulletin

Happy and Safe Boating!

"Respect the Past – Create the Future"

NEXT OUTING

**21-22 Sept
River Mouth**

July – 2024 – Engels Captains Cook

27-28 July 2024

Three boat crews joined Commodore Rod on Friday afternoon and enjoyed a sunny, wind-free interlude, setting up the shelter and enjoying a relaxed evening around a roaring fire. For the rest of the participants, Saturday morning dawned cold and wet! There were high hopes, however, that the day would fine up as it had on Friday and that all participating captain-chefs gathered for the



UPCOMING EVENTS

**5 October
Myall River Fair
Sail Past
5-7 October
Myall Lakes**



cookout would be doing their culinary thing in a rain-free environment. By about 1.30pm on Saturday afternoon, there was a total of twelve boats tied up around the Engels wharf: Shalimar (with Karen and Bernard) Tri-Relaxing (with John and Robbie) Bobcat (with Chris and Bob) Toy Ship (with Rod, joined on Saturday by Mack and Linda) Carroa (with Mal and Bec) Ampollo (with Tracy and Craig) River Gypsy (With Tony and Christine) Calypso (with Heidi and Geoff) Therapy (with Greg and Pamela) Alfred (with Dave) and Kiandra (with Ben).

The fire was blazing, the coals were glowing, and it was time for the captains (except for Bob, Ben and Mack) to begin their awesome preparations for the competition cook-off. As per the rules, all crew not cooking weren't allowed to assist, hint, or advise the cooks in any way, so they were on their own and looking extremely well-prepared and competent! Onlookers enjoyed the fire (not so much the smoke as the wind changed) and a companionable drink until a light rain forced almost everyone under the shelter, including those cooks who could happily leave their camp ovens to look after themselves.



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A little away from our centre of activity were some younger local people who had set up camp and were very keen on sussing out our captains' efforts as they, too, had camp ovens hanging over their fire, issuing delicious smells. It was good to interact with these 'youngsters' (two of whom were pregnant and camping intrepidly in swags!) and be able to encourage them to join MLAC, share some afternoon tea and sample some alcohol-soaked gummy babies (their offering to us).

As Commodore Rod was completely focused on his three-camp-oven-baked-dinner extravaganza, Rear Commodore Rebecca took the floor to convene the Huddle (on time

at 4.00pm, of course). Nothing like being thrown in at the deep end, with only a few dot points to go on, but Bec handled it like the professional she is. The main issues mentioned were that the Independence Wharf project was ongoing, the Tappas in Tea Gardens outing was hugely successful, and that the next outing will be a river mouth event on 21/22 September. October 5 -7 will be a Progressive outing, starting with a sail-past during the Myall River Fair, and then heading up to Engels for lunch. More information on these outings will be forthcoming fairly soon. The Myall River Fair organisers were very impressed with our last sail-past, for the anniversary of the Singing Bridge, and have asked us for a repeat performance. A sail-past used to occur at the Prawn Festival. The Bridge sail-past was well-attended by MLAC members in their boats, so it is hoped that we have as many, or more, joining in to celebrate the River Fair. A special 'thank you' was given to Bob for his role as fire-warden from Friday afternoon onwards.

The Huddle ended at 4.20pm and it was time for the non-cooks to bring out their offerings for 'nibbles by the camp fire'. As usual, the spread of nibbly things was impressive and delicious, so much so that several people commented that they didn't have much room left for dinner! John's oysters were, as usual, plentiful and hugely popular. (Special thanks to the shucker-in-charge (John) and his eager apprentice (Tracy). Our fearless captains were undeterred by whining's that stomachs were full, and the delicious smells and interesting glimpses of the camp oven contents soon reignited enthusiasm and appetites.



Mal and Craig busy chopping



What a motley crew!



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6.30pm - put all cooking implements down and step away from your camp ovens! It was time for the offerings to be sampled (anonymously, of course) by the judging panel. A great deal of heads together and muttering followed. Most of the young men from the near-by camp came over to check out the offerings as well (keenly competitive for their own cooking efforts which, we heard later, were also delicious, especially the pork with genuine, crackly crackling). Finally, the winner was announced - Bernard's amazing creation of chicken, mushrooms, cheese and cream had taken the trophy!



A lot of deep discussion went into the judging



The Winner! Congratulations Bernard.

The runner-up was John for his contribution of baked ribs -totally delicious and falling off the bone. Overall, the consensus was that all the offerings were of very high quality. It was good to see that there was a variety of menu items this year, not just stews as we've tended to have in the past. Yes, there were delicious casseroles, but also a full baked dinner (lamb shank, roasted veggies including sweet corn on the cob, and peas), baked ribs, a curry, and sausage bakes to add variety. Non-competition offerings were also added to the fare. Bernard baked a to-die-for damper (in addition to his prize-winning chicken and mushroom dish), and Heidi baked a whole pumpkin, stuffed with potato slices, garlic and cream, in a camp oven buried in glowing coals. Delicious!



Craig jubilant with his new cup



Greg stirring up a storm!



A surprise 2nd place for John!



It looks like a great story!



Dave, chop, chop, chopping



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By the time everyone had stuffed themselves, the clouds had largely dispersed and the rain had stopped. Agreement was universal that a half hour sitting around the campfire was necessary before the dessert offerings were brought to the table. As always, dessert offerings were plentiful and delicious. As well as slices and cakes, members were even able to enjoy a trifle. It was all fabulous and filling - until the marshmallows came out to be roasted over the fire and suddenly some members found they did have a little room left for a toasted marshmallow after all.

Music, stories and conversation around the fire brought the evening to a close. The weather had (mostly) held, the food was amazing, the fire huge and warming, and the warm camaraderie and conversations were what makes this particular MLAC outing so very special. Sunday morning dawned and with it came a very chilly breeze. Luckily, there was still enough donated wood to create a roaring fire to keep the cold away. With breath steaming, the early risers embraced the warmth before beginning the morning's clean-up of the night before. Soon the smell of bacon sizzling wafted on the breeze (a stiff breeze by now) as several crews were busy preparing breakfast aboard their boats.



Later in the morning, as we all waited for the tide to come up, morning tea was enjoyed by all as we sat around the fire. More cake, more home-made biscuits... what a hard life! By noon, the tide was deemed high enough and those heading back to Tea Gardens pulled away from the knot of boats tightly arranged around Engels wharf. While three boats remained for another night, everyone else motored away in their respective directions towards home, after yet another fabulously successful Captains Cook outing.

