

"UP THE COLO" by Noel Shields

The History of KMYC's visits to the Colo River.

"Up The Colo" is a phrase that is part of the Club folklore. Former Club honorary Secretary "Graham Taylor wrote "We went "Up the Colo" at Easter in 1957 for the first time with 23 vessels taking part. We all took eats ashore to a member Dr. McGarrity's farm." (Armitage, 1995). In a further passage in Armitage's Book Graham Taylor was quoted as saying. "What makes our cruises so popular. It is the indefinable 'something' we are all so conscious of when taking part in our club activities- the club spirit. It is a happy family gathering."

After a few years the group moved to a property owned by Farmer Jones.

In the 1980's the farms were sold and no longer available for the club to use them as a land base. Mick O'Dowd a Maritime Services Officer had a property further up the river. He welcomed us to use the property as a land base.



On Good Friday the boats leave the Club at 6.00 am to catch the tide on the way up. It takes about 6 hours for the slower boats. The faster boats can sleep in a bit and leave at about 8.00 am.

The marquee, barbeque and tables (carried up by the flotilla) are set up in readiness for the activities on shore. The boats anchor just off the bank and we go ashore in the dinghies. The meals were usually a barbeque and salads. On the river a mist comes in and creates the most amazing reflections. In the nineties, the farm had an orange orchard which we could raid. Members who have yachts and cannot get under the Hawkesbury Bridge pitch their tents on shore, others drive up for the day.





One year when we arrived there was a large bull on the property. Mick explained that he saved the bull as he came floating down the river in a flood. The flood was in June so he was named the bull "Juno".



On Saturday it was the custom to take a run in the dinghies to the sand bar. Everyone took a picnic and if the weather was warm, some were brave enough to swim.



Every year the sand bar changes - sometimes it disappears but in 2014 it returned and it grassed over.



" The Drink and Drift"

On the way back one year Ken & Noel were putting along in their dinghy when Noel said to Ken "The river is so tranquil and beautiful, it is shame to be making all this noise." So Ken cut the engine and we drifted down the river and enjoyed the quiet. As others came along they asked if we had broken down and we said "No we are just enjoying the peace." They also cut their engines and tied up to us and so the drink and drift was born. For a few years a water fight was also waged on the "Drink & Drift" but as some members did not like getting wet it has now changed to a water fight back at the river near the campsite.





“The Young Ones Have Fun Also”



One year Russell Tyler had an out-of-date life raft which he gave to the kids and they had hours of fun with it. They also had dinghy races up and down the river. We called them the mosquito fleet.



On Sunday morning the Easter bunny came and delivered Easter eggs to all the boats.



Then it was customary for the men to don their whites and we all putted down the river to church. The Club had a long association with the little Anglican Church called St. John's at Lower Portland. The history goes back as far as 1957 when the club first decided to make the Colo their destination for the Easter cruises. In about 1985 or 1986 the Club built a veranda in appreciation for the many years of friendship the parishioners had extended to the members of Kuring-Gai Motor Yacht Club.





But sadly the parishioner's numbers dwindled and the Parish decided in the year 1999, that St. John's would be deconsecrated and sold. For one year after the Minister from Wilberforce came and we had a service in the church. Then in 2000 he came to the campsite and held the service there.



That all came to an end as the Minister was too busy with the church in Wilberforce to make the journey to Lower Portland.

Then it was back to the campsite for lunch and the Easter hat parade.



On Monday morning after a champagne breakfast everyone packs up the tent, barbeque, tables and all the gear and head for home.



