

Chapter 14

Sailing Around the Bay 1965

Ken Venn a senior member and crew member, 19 year old Graeme Moor spent a five day trip sailing around Port Phillip Bay for their holiday and they only spent three pounds doing so.

It was believed that Ken and Graeme were the second only Sharpie to do such a trip, the first being some 10 years earlier.

Ken thought of the idea to sail around Port Phillip Bay during his holidays as he had some spare time up his sleeve. Checking the weather for the week ahead, he gave the all clear.

So with a few supplies, such as: a fry pan, billy, stove and eating utensils they set off from Mordialloc at 11:00 am on Sunday the 28th February 1965 heading down the bay to Sorrento on their first leg.

Ken's aim was to reach Mornington by the end of the day. However with a good breeze and a fast boat like his 12 Square Metre Heavy Weight Sharpie named Avalon, they were able to arrive in Sorrento, in time for tea but not before encountering very strong 35 mph winds from Dromana onwards. They slept the night at Sorrento in a tent on the foreshore.

Their second leg was straight across the bay and down to Geelong but due to heavy winds they decided to stay in Sorrento for the day. However, determined to spend their holiday on a boat (at least of some sort), they took the ferry across to Queenscliff and back.

Whilst on the ferry, they planned their crossing which encompassed a 'near approach' to the entrance to the Bay. Ken obtained the high and low tide times from the ferry Captain to ensure they had a safe crossing passed the entrance at the turn of the tide, the following day.

With more favourable wind conditions in the morning, Ken and Graeme left for Geelong around mid-day on Tuesday. They followed a ship bound for the Antarctic for several kilometres, then sailed up close to the entrance as planned and then headed down to Geelong, arriving at 8:00 pm.

From there they sailed back to Portarlington which they had passed the previous day then up to Williamstown with the final leg back home to Mordialloc on Thursday. They again struck some heavy conditions with 25 mph winds and 15 feet seas between Point Cook and the Jellibrand lighthouse.

Royal Victorian Yacht Club officials told Ken and Graeme, they believed their sail from Geelong to Williamstown in five hours was a record. One of the officials told them to pick one of the moored yachts to sleep on for the night and that they did on a sleek 30 foot racing yacht.

In the morning, Ken rang from Williamstown to his old mate Ken Raphael in Mordialloc to advising of his approximate arrival time back at the club and to bring down his trailer.

Ken Raphael did this but also organised a photographer / journalist to take a photo as they came ashore.

Little fanfare or fuss was made about their adventure and achievement, however an article and a photo appeared in the local newspaper in March 1965 based on the adventure. See photo next page.



Graeme (left) was an insurance clerk and a member of the sailing club for five years at the time whilst Ken (right) was some years older and a company representative for ACI home insulation. Ken was a long serving member who eventually became Commodore from 1984 to 1986 and a Life member of the Club. Ken still visits the club on opening days to reminisce about the 'good old days' with his fellow sailors.