

NEWSLETTER

Touring South Australia with Cygnet 20 “Tide Rider”

by Mark and Kathy Stringfellow

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In November 2020, Mark and Kathy embarked on a 26 day trip from Central Coast in NSW to South Australia with their Cygnet 20, Tide Rider. This newsletter is entirely dedicated to this very inspirational tour. Bluewater Cruising Yachts and the Cygnet 20 Gaff Association warmly thank Mark and Kathy for kindly sharing their adventure and wonderful photographs with us.

With the summer break coming and state borders opening, it is certainly a timely reminder of explorations we can enjoy on water and on land with the Cygnet 20s.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you and yours a safe and happy holiday season.

David Bradburn and the Bluewater Team.

On the road to South Australia – Camping with Tide Rider

In October 2020 the border with South Australia was opened. This gave us the chance to combine visiting relatives and try some long distance touring/exploring with Tide Rider. We are campers/kayakers and not really sailors as such. We purchased Tide Rider to use as a base for camping on water. Its 0.34m draught with keel/rudder up allows us to get into shallow bays and creeks, well away from most other watercraft.





On the road Tide Rider became our caravan. It towed easily and it was great having its amenities already set up behind us. All up this trip we drove just under 6500kms. Due to COVID we had to go via Broken Hill to get to Adelaide. We drove nearly 1100kms the first day and pulled up at a rest area between Wilcannia and Broken Hill. Sleeping in the boat while it was on the trailer was easy and comfortable. After spending a week visiting relatives in Adelaide we drove to Coffin Bay.

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That trip took two days as we called in to Port Pirie, Port Augusta, Whyalla and Port Lincoln to have a quick look. All very different places to what we see on the East Coast. We overnighed in Tide Rider on a dirt side road. On arrival at Coffin Bay we booked in to the caravan park for one night.

Whilst not as roomy as a caravan it was still very comfortable in the little Cygnet. We got some compliments from the other caravaners on Tide Rider's good looks. Staying in a caravan park gives you the benefits of amenities, power and the security to unhitch the boat and sightsee. After having a good look around we prepared for the on water part of our trip.



Tide Rider on the way to South Australia with historical stops at Wilcannia and Broken Hill. Wilcannia, 965 km northwest of Sydney, was once the third largest port in NSW after Sydney and Newcastle and place of a thriving wool industry until the late 1990's. The town is part of the Darling River Run, a 730km drive along the river course. Broken Hill, 'The Silver City' located 1,160 km from Sydney has been mined continuously for almost 120 years with one of the world's richest source of lead-zinc-silver deposit.

Coffin and Mount Dutton Bays



We left the next morning and spent the next 6 days on the water in Tide Rider exploring Coffin Bay, which is very shallow in parts. Being able to pull up the keel and rudder proved very useful in seeking shelter and finding that perfect 'on water' campsite.

We had some great sailing. Exploring Mount Dutton Bay we were accompanied by some curious local dolphins at time. With strong winds forecast for the next few days and having been away for 5 nights, we decided it was best to head back. As we returned to the boat ramp, the wind got up to around 30 knots at times. It was too strong to comfortably sail on even the second reef, so we dropped the main and returned on the partially furled jib. Even with that small amount of sail out we were still doing 5+ knots. Tide Rider is such a versatile little boat and very safe in trying conditions.

South Australia is mostly long coastline with open bays. We like sheltered bays and creeks. Coffin Bay, to the west of Port Lincoln, looked like the destination that suited our sailing/kayaking/camping style the best. We were away for 26 days on our trip and are pleased to report that long distance touring with Tide Rider works very well.



Tide Rider's peregrination through South Australian waters.



Coffin Bay has the highest density of local dolphins in the world with an estimated 300 southern Australian bottlenose dolphins living in Coffin Bay. Flinders University research revealed that the local Burrenun dolphins are separate from the Indo-Pacific bottlenose dolphins and are only found in coastal and inshore waters of Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia.



We got back to the boat ramp late in the afternoon and after loading Tide Rider back on the trailer we began packing up. As it was getting dark we decided to spend the night in the car park and continue next morning. I moved to the most secluded area and we had a great nights sleep, which left us fresh to finish packing up. We then returned to the caravan park and did more sightseeing for a couple of days. Exploring an unfamiliar bay proved challenging at times, especially judging, depth, tide, strong winds and currents. What surprised us this trip was just how windy South Australia can be. I guess the many wind farms should have given us a clue. There were very few days with winds under 20 knots and that gets tiring when you are actually on the water. Thanks to the Cygnet's shallow draught and ability to get in close to shore, or even beach it, we were able to find a sheltered spot each night to get out of the wind. With Tide Rider's versatility, we had no problems coping with the varying conditions and had a wonderful and memorable time away.

Some of the best camping we've done! Now that lockdowns are over we are looking forward to our next trip touring with Tide Rider.



Coffin Bay oysters are back on the menu!

After more than 2.6 million Coffin Bay oysters recalled and the closure of oyster harvesting operations in November 2021, the Coffin Bay Oysters are back on time for the end of year celebrations! Oysters have been harvested in Coffin Bay since early 1840. The native Angasi flat oyster was dredged to near extinction by 1880 but is making a come back in Coffin Bay. The Pacific oyster was introduced to the Coffin Bay area in 1969 to become a key industry in the area.

