

# AB

## Australian Boating

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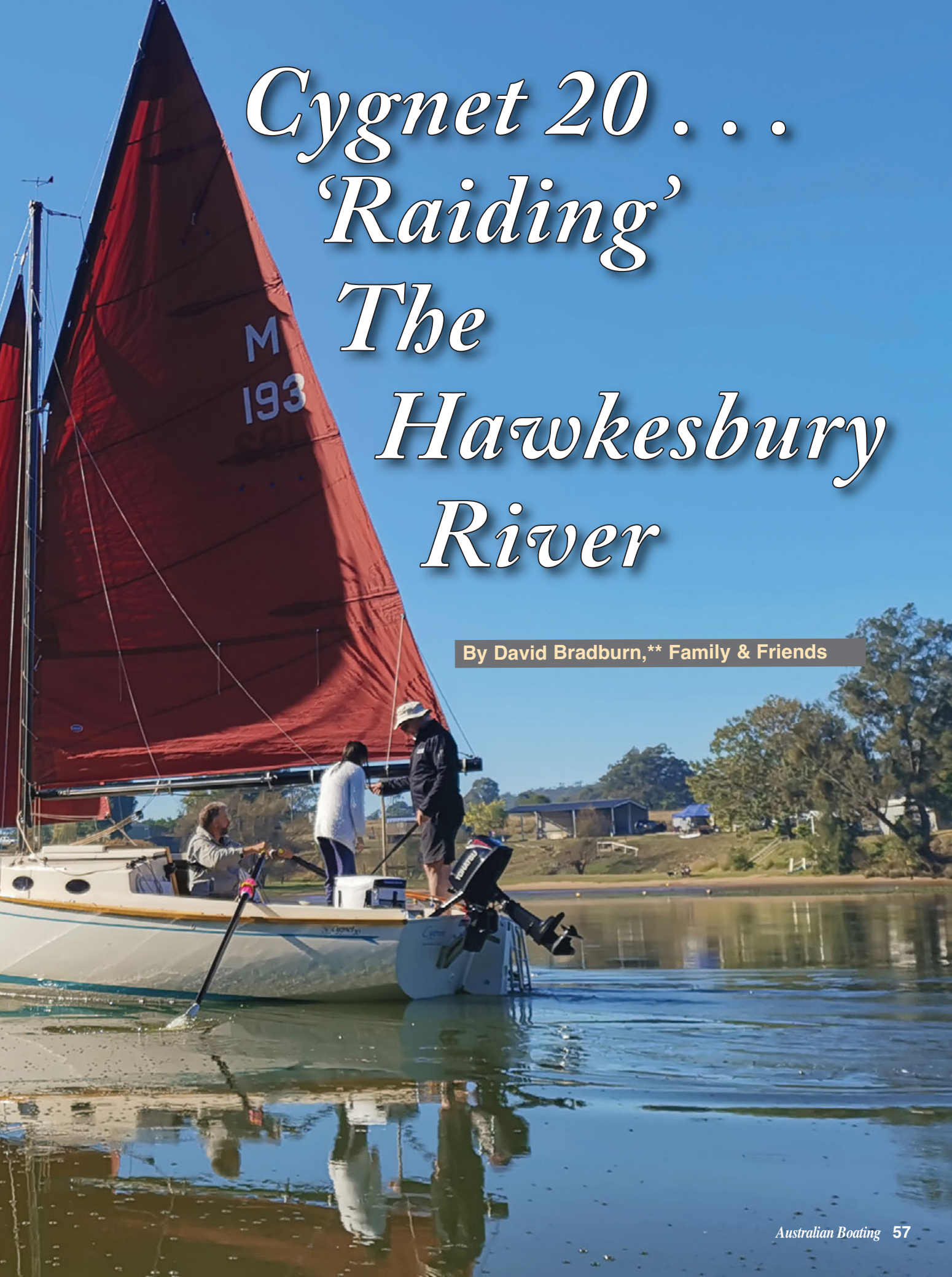






*Winter scenes on the Hawkesbury River . . a cold, foggy morning awaits the Cygnet crew as they made their way down the river. In the main spread pic, David 'rows gently down the stream' . . as we look over this tranquil setting thanks to James Christie's pic from the kayak across companion Shaynah Andrews' shoulders.*





*Cygnet 20 . . .  
'Raiding'  
The  
Hawkesbury  
River*

By David Bradburn,\*\* Family & Friends



## Cygnets Down The Hawkesbury River

**F**or some reason this trip had stuck in my mind for years. It may be due to its historical significance in establishing Sydney, the book written about a gaffer plying its trade “*The Secret River*” or because I had travelled across it hundreds of times, and only knew the eastern side. We had discussed this trip and joked about it with one of my staff, Kevin, who spent a lot of time on the river as a kid with his brothers. We talked about sailing and rowing a 20’ gaffer in period clothing and beating the drum - Kevin and I would be dressed in convict attire, of course!

We talked about the length of the river (120km) from Windsor to Brooklyn, and how difficult it



**\*\* Disclosure & Editor's Notes:** The Cygnet 20 is an ultra-modern, but classic-looking GRP trailer sailer built by Bluewater Cruising Yachts from Cardiff, NSW, with many 'state-of-play' features such as water ballast (making it lighter to tow), and an easily handled carbon mast (and spars) for the loose-footed, gaff-rigged sail plan. This charismatic report was written by the boatbuilder, David Bradburn, who is the CEO of Bluewater Cruising Yachts, and photographed along with his family and friends, assembled with David's wife Corinne, for their website ([bluewatercruisingyachts.com](http://bluewatercruisingyachts.com)). Here, their collective passion for trailer yacht cruising in the Cygnet 20 is proudly on display for everyone to read, enjoy - and hopefully, become inspired to join them in a Cygnet 20 of their own one day soon! (- Peter Webster, Editor)

would be to sail due to high cliffs and the tide. Also, the amount of traffic on the river (that could make it dangerous) as well not wanting to use the engine as this would not be an authentic experience.

The scene was ultimately set; all we had to do was finish the boat and live our dream of raiding the Hawkesbury.

● **Raid** - a sail and oar adventure. This is a leisure pursuit combining sailing and rowing. It involves a fleet of small boats capable of being rowed and sailed, exploring a coastline or inland waterway over several days, often with some competitive element.

We had launched the company's Cygnet 20 "Cygnet" and tested her systems with a few changes, including the engine mounting position which greatly improved her performance and handling under power. Other than that, she has essentially stayed the same with a few changes to her interior decore on the last 3 boats.

What I also felt was lacking in cruising inland waterways was the sense of adventure, challenge, and fatigue factor I have experienced from cruising on our Bluewater 420 China Girl to such cruising grounds as the Whitsundays, Tasmania and New Zealand, a sense of satisfaction completing a passage.

So this trip had to compete with my other boating experiences with the added difficulty of being in a much smaller boat.

We had the boat which was now extensively tested with good race results, and quick to set up. We had approached Croker to specify the oars, rowlocks, and he also put me in contact with Rowfit International in Tasmania who specialises in competition rowing equipment.

We tested rowing the Cygnet on Lake Macquarie which was not ideal due to slight chop, and wind at the time.

The next time we would test her would be on the Hawkesbury River at Windsor which was organised for the June 2019 Long weekend.

After working out the logistics of launching and retrieving "Cygnet" at 2 different locations, food, sleeping gear, crew, etc. we were now ready to depart Windsor 3.30 pm with our first test to row / sail 9nm (18 km) against the tide







## Cygnets Down The Hawkesbury River



*Getting into the power play now (!) as Will takes over the oars, and the crew combine to offer earnest support . . . below, James and Shaynah run back-up in their yak - a faster rig, but nowhere near as comfortable as the Cygnet . . . .*



just past Cattai.

We were all excited albeit with a little trepidation not knowing what to expect, and whether we would even make it. This increased the excitement, and made it a real adventure.

● **Adventure** - *an adventure is an exciting experience that is typically bold, sometimes risky undertaking. Adventures may be activities with some potential for physical danger such as traveling, exploring, skydiving, mountain climbing, scuba diving, river rafting or participating in extreme sports. (Wikipedia definition).*

The crew were myself, David Bradburn, 54 (Cygnet Builder), Will Hardcastle, 63 (Cygnet Designer), Will Bradburn (16) and Jessie Rose Bradburn (12). We also had company in the form of a 3.6m kayak crewed by James Christie, 29 (Shipwright) and Shaynah Andrews, 28 (PhD).

This was going to be a trip of a lifetime and we were about to begin. Will H commented while driving to Windsor if there is fog that usually means there is no wind. (This proved to be the case over the whole long weekend).

Setting off from Windsor boat ramp we were keen to see if we had what it took, so Will H started rowing for 30 minutes then I would take over, followed by Will B.

Will H had made a “lead” using a socket from a tool kit and some light line. He marked the line in metres with a permanent marker. He did test it out for fun, but as we rowed most of the way down the middle of the river it was not put





to the test.

The air was cool. We were averaging 1.5 - 1.8 knots, and we were quickly into the food and snacks. There was no wind, and the river was glassy smooth.

Not long into the trip Jessie Rose (pictured below) let it be known she did not want to just be a passenger, and wanted to row as well. She rowed for 15 minutes, and was rowing 0.7 knots which was still going forward. We could check our speed / distance with the Navionics app on our phone / iPad.

We noticed for this part of the trip mostly agricultural farms, and irrigation pumps along the river as well brown dirty water. Nearing the end of this first part of the trip there were high cliffs, and thick bush right up to the river banks. We had arrived 8.30 pm in the dark, however, the night was still quite light. We managed to find a small, sandy beach section in the dark which just so happened to be where James and Shaynah had arrived 2 hours earlier having left 30 minutes

before us, and paddled hard to reach their accommodation before dark.

James left his phone in the kayak so got a lift from hotel staff to retrieve it by which time we had just arrived. We spoke briefly, however, could not see one another due to thick bush between us. We had passed the first test!

The kids were keen to explore the small beach in the dark under an oil lamp and torch. They were excited to start a fire and cook marshmallows. Having achieved this (even though the twigs were damp) chicken rolls were served in wrappers whilst beer and drinks were passed around, we were all pleased with ourselves.

We checked out tidal information with high tide 7.15 am the next morning. My shoulders were on fire which was a good feeling because I knew I had worked. Quick to sleep for us adults but the kids were buzzing with excitement, and all I remember is falling asleep to their laughter and giggles.



*12 year old Jessie Rose Bradburn was never going to be content as a passenger - and took to the oars like the little champ she is. Onya Jess - you go, girl!*





## Cygnets Down The Hawkesbury River

Next morning I woke up a little sore having to rub the shoulders throughout the night to keep on sleeping. We were all in our sleeping bags and very cosy in the “Cygnets”. The kids up in the forward V-berth, and the adults down each side. After having woken up we knew the tide was with us so we could not lose any time as the tide would change 1.00 pm.

So we untied our bow line and started rowing into very thick fog. The river was probably 60m wide, however we could hardly see the sides. We rowed for 1 hour before we could feel the faintest breeze. The river was now winding and weaving with some magnificent gorges, and



native bush settings.

Sailing had come into its own and can now feel why harnessing the wind was such a

technological advancement to manpower. Its fickleness however, soon left us moving at 1 knot with the tide. We had sailed for almost 2 hours which was great!

Back to rowing which going with the tide is very satisfying, having rowed against it the afternoon before. We were rowing at 2-2.5 knots, and now feeling good from the day before.



While heading down the river we could hear the roar of high powered racing boats, and then nothing. As we slowly got closer we came across the Dargle Power Boat Races, and had to wait a little while before a race was finished.

We were then told to get through as fast as possible, so we lowered the outboard and flattened it. . . How fast were we going? Hey, with a stern wave, at 5.5 knots!

There were hundreds of spectators lining the shoreline only to have it interrupted with the “Cygnets” motoring through the course. We all came out on deck to show them how it should be done.

Once through we started sailing and rowing again with little wind. This part of the trip was very slow going, and for 2 hours of effort we had very little to show for it as the tide had turned!

We did have some breeze that kicked in,

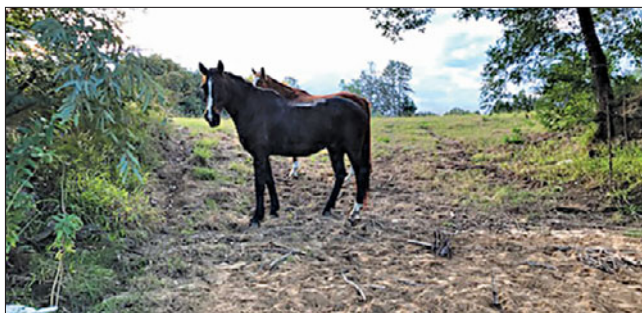




however, after tacking 3 times across the river had barely made any ground so it was decided to stop at another small beach and wait until the tide turned 6.00 pm.



This was a lovely 3 hour stop where we had the chance to answer nature's call, check out the riverbank, eat prawns, drink beer and prepare our early dinner, chunky soup and bread rolls. We also had some curious locals come down to the water's edge to say hello which scared the children due to their assertive behaviour.



The visitors were rewarded with a couple of apples for their curiosity, after which the mandatory camp fire was organised. After straightening the windex (which caught up in the trees) and having been rested and fed, we were feeling good to make it to Wisemans Ferry, which was 12 nm away.

What was really good about this leg was I saw my kids, Will and Jessie Rose come of age, and really get into the challenge with Jessie Rose rowing for 45 minutes, and Will 1.5 hours. It was wonderful to observe and talk to them about what we were seeing, and going through. They lifted so much Will H decided to take a nap for 3-4 hours before it was his turn.

We rowed through the early evening and passed ski park after ski park then caravan parks

and holiday shacks by the shore with some large cliffs along the way. We were all feeling stronger and excited to make our 26 nm day's journey.

Reaching Wisemans Ferry around 10.30 pm the tide had changed, and Will H was now rowing the last leg against the tide.



We picked up a mooring at 11.15 pm next to the second ferry for a well deserved sleep. I felt so cold having steered for 2.5 hours in my shorts and jacket. It took me hours to warm up in the sleeping bag.

The next morning (Monday) we had a distance of 25 nm or 45 km to travel. High tide was 6.00 am, and a 10 knot NW breeze was forecast. It was a beautiful, foggy morning, and now the river opened up with a much wider expanse between gorges.

Still winding and interesting we noticed the boating styles had changed from ski to houseboats, and now fishing boats were the norm. Mangroves were abundant, and we rowed for 5 hours before the breeze kicked in enough to get us to our destination Brooklyn by 3.00 pm.

We had decided that for the last 8 nm we may have to motor to get to our finish in good light.





*Cygnets co-designer Will Hardcastle on watch as 16yr old Will Bradburn steers the Cygnet down this pretty section of river.*



## Cygnets Down The Hawkesbury River

As it turned out in our last 2 hours we motored for 1 hour, and sailed for 1 hour at 4.5 knots!

Success! We had reached the Deerubbin boat ramp, Mooney Mooney Point, just before the Hawkesbury River bridge. We had achieved what we had set out to do, and are a lot wiser in what you have to deal with when raiding rivers.

We felt very pleased with ourselves. Having our own accommodation with us made it convenient to work the river, and stop when necessary. "Cygnet" was very comfortable and it is an amazing craft to be able to row, sail and accommodate 4 crew, all taking turns in the challenge which made it very satisfying for all involved.

This is definitely something I want to do more of with the kids which will bring us closer together having these adventures.

I am now dreaming of the Hunter River which is 300 km long with so much history. I can't wait!

In the near future Bluewater will be organising and promoting "Raids" – sail and oar events in Australian lakes, rivers and waterways, with the growing number of Cygnet 20 owners increasing makes for an exciting time to be in the marine industry.

**AB**

### Passage Figures:

Windsor to Brooklyn 60nm

27.25 hrs @ 2.2 knots average

Row	18 hours	Saturday	5 hours	9 nm	1.8 knots
Sail	5.75 hours	Sunday	13.25 hours	26 nm	1.96 knots
Row/Sail	2.5 hours	Monday	9 hours	25 nm	2.77 knots
Motor	1 hour (not counted; race avoidance)				

TOTAL 27.25 hours

### SPECIFICATIONS

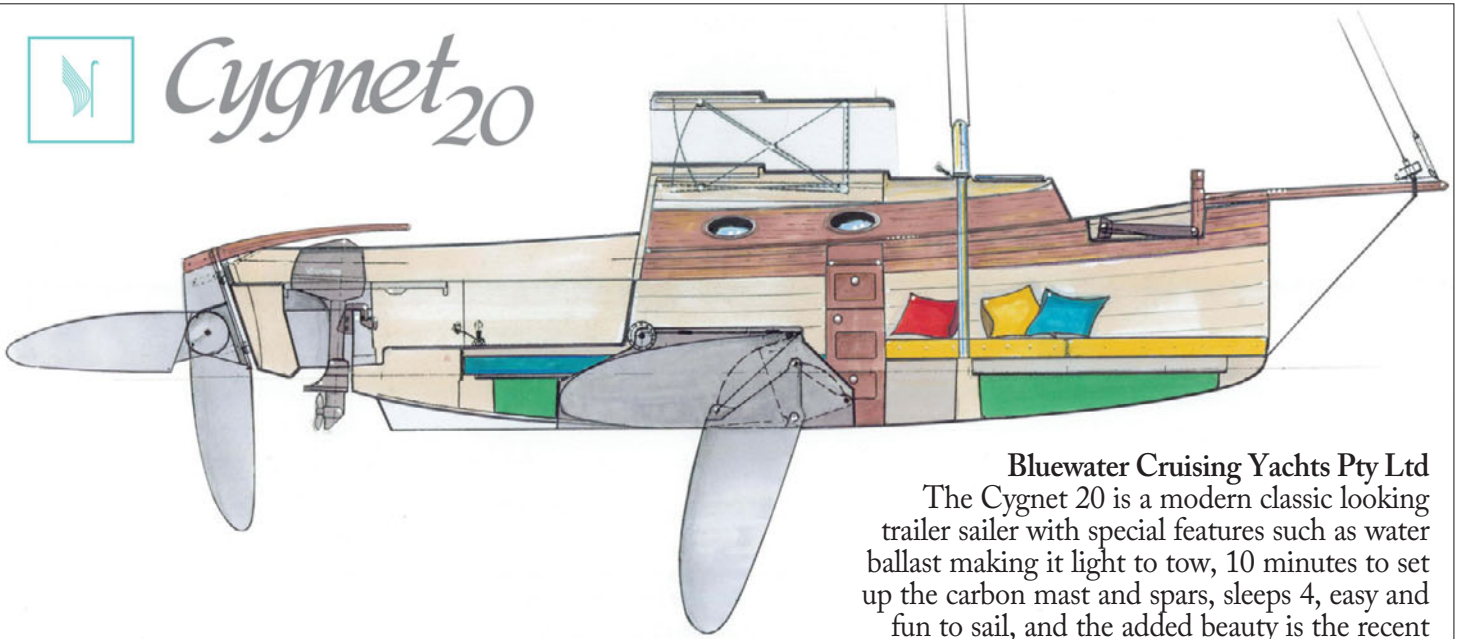
#### Cygnet 20 Trailer Yacht

Length OA.....	5.85 m
Hull Length.....	5.40 m
Beam.....	2.23 m
Draft (keel up) .....	0.34 m
Draft (keel down).....	1.57 m
Displacement (approx) .....	1250 kg
Std Highway Weight (Boat).....	800 kg
Std trailer weight (approx) .....	350 kg
Mainsail area .....	16.4 m2
Jib area.....	7.15 m2
Berths.....	Four
Water Ballast (litres) .....	240 L
Rec Max hp (o/b).....	5hp 2-stroke
Designer.....	Peter Lowe Design / Will Hardcastle Yacht Design
Builder.....	David Bradburn, Bluewater Cruising Yachts



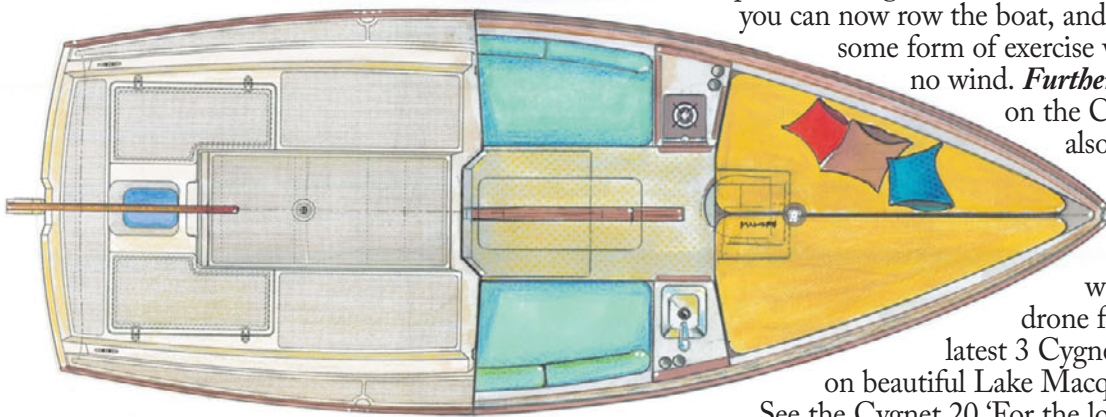


# Cygnet<sub>20</sub>



## Bluewater Cruising Yachts Pty Ltd

The Cygnet 20 is a modern classic looking trailer sailer with special features such as water ballast making it light to tow, 10 minutes to set up the carbon mast and spars, sleeps 4, easy and fun to sail, and the added beauty is the recent optional fitting of 10 ft Croker carbon oars so you can now row the boat, and benefit from some form of exercise when there is no wind. **Further information** on the Cygnet 20 can also be found on our website



which includes drone footage of the latest 3 Cygnet 20's sailing on beautiful Lake Macquarie, NSW. See the Cygnet 20 'For the love of Sailing' or call David on 0412 656 271 Bluewater Cruising Yachts 39B Munibung Road Cardiff NSW 2285 (02) 4956 8522

