

Easter Cruise

March 29-31, 2024

Cruise Captain Randall's inaugural cruise on the sunny Easter long weekend was a wonderful way to begin the 2024 cruising season. The weather cooperated in terms of sunshine and warmth (although the wind could have stepped up a bit more for the sailors in the group).



Several boats left the Club around mid-day and met up with the rest at Princess Bay on Portland Island. When everyone arrived, we were seven boats: **Randall Walford** on *Swell Skimmer*, **Steve and Melinda Broughton** on *Gray Pearl*, **Alison and Jamie Pettigrew** on *Tranquillitas*, **Kim and Karen Laidlaw** on *Nest Egg*, **Jill Oakes and her friend Fiona** on *Robyn Hood*, **Barb and Ted Baldwinson** on *Snorri B*, and **Wendy and Kevin Vine** on *Deryn Mor*. (It wasn't quite a Ranger Tug rendezvous, but it almost qualified...)

Anchoring, rafting, and creative stern-tying got us all secured, with time for naps, and eventually saw us all meet on the beach for a walk. Karen led us on a dry trail to a white sand beach looking back at Fulford Harbour, which was a perfect walk in the forest in the sunshine. Even Lucy, the Broughtons' lovely dog, was impressed!





A plan to eat dinner on the beach was reconsidered due to a noticeable late March chill in the air when the sun lowered on the horizon. Therefore dinner was set up on the Pettigrews' boat *Tranquillitas* (that's what you get when your boat is the biggest and everyone fits on it!) There was, as is usual at such events, no lack of food, from chili to chicken to salmon, along with veggies and salad. Lots of conversation and sharing of stories amongst a range of folks from new boaters on their first cruise to seasoned "old salts". There is a certain charm that enlivens gatherings around food on boats, with virtual strangers gradually becoming friends; it was clearly evident that evening. Thanks so much to Alison and Jamie for hosting us all.



After a quiet night, we hauled in the anchors and made for Mill Bay in the calm seas and high cloud. *Deryn Mor* stopped to pick up the motorless and doggedly paddling Flying Fifteen *Robyn Hood* and gave them a tow to Saanich Inlet, as there was no wind to be seen. (The intrepid duo of Jill and Fiona certainly impressed our group with their spunk and optimism!) They later sailed (and paddled) in almost no wind down Saanich Inlet to Mill Bay, where they were greeted with cheers when they arrived.

The Mill Bay Marina is a great facility and dealt with our group in a most friendly, welcoming and efficient manner. We were all close together and able to gather on a beautiful wide dock between all the boats. The facilities there are excellent for visiting boaters.

Many folks went up in a taxi to Enrico Winery for a very good wine tasting outside on a lovely patio overlooking the vineyard. Several bottles of wine were bought and enjoyed later. It was generally agreed that their white, rosé, bubbly and port-style wines were well worth consideration.



Dinner at Bridgeman's Bistro was fun (part of a great moorage deal of \$35 including power, if you ate at the bistro). We had an excellent server who appreciated our gregarious group.

After a quiet night, Jill left to sail home solo before anyone else was awake, and the Pettigrews left early to go back to Sidney.

The rest of us decided that Easter brunch on the dock was a better idea than the original plan of stopping at Russell Island for lunch. Almost magically, a marvelous selection of goodies appeared on the dock (Madeleines, cheeses, fruit, Easter eggs) and it was great to get together in the Easter sunshine before starting the journey home.



The gang on the dock for Easter brunch.



Ted having a nap in the sun on Snorri B.

Deryn Mor and *Swell Skimmer* attempted some sailing off Russell Island but it was mostly a motor home. *Deryn Mor* spotted a tiny sail over by the bottom end of Prevost near the Channel Islands and decided it had to be *Robyn Hood* stuck in the tide with no wind, so went over to check. Jill was happy to have a tow home.



Looking back on the weekend, if there were going to be Academy Awards for this cruise, here is how they could play out:

- Best Place for Large Gatherings: Pettigrews' *Tranquillitas*
- Most Intrepid: Jill's *Robyn Hood*
- Best Tow Boat: Vines' *Deryn Mor*
- Best Stocked Foodie Boat: Broughtons' *Gray Pearl*
- Best Cockpit for a Nap: Baldwinsons' *Snorri B*
- Most Modified from Original Design: Randall's *Swell Skimmer*
- Best Place for Impromptu Socializing: Laidlaws' *Nest Egg*



Thanks to Randall for all his work organizing the details of the cruise, and to everyone who came along to make the cruise a success. We are all keen for the next one!

Access more photos (and in larger format) soon on our Flickr page from the Club website.

Photos by Jill Oakes, Melinda Broughton, Randall Walford and Wendy Vine

