

## Yarrawonga to Goolwa in an RL28

Brian and Louise are travelling from Yarrawonga where the River Murray is blocked by a hydroelectric dam back to Goolwa in their RL28 Elanora, a trip of approximately 2000 kms 25<sup>th</sup> June 2012





Picked up a few final provisions, decamped Lil'E (Elanora's tender) and launched Elanora without mishap at the ramp just downstream of the Yarrawonga dam. Once Brian had stored the car and trailer at the caravan park, we pushed off into the swift moving stream and started our journey. The river is quite high, just below minor flood, and we have about 2 metres extra under our keel that our chart indicates. Despite the extra water we are soon dodging snags and the rudder thuds into a couple deeper below us. We strike camp on a sandy beach, build a fire and enjoy a couple of sundowners.



26<sup>th</sup> June – 1<sup>st</sup> July 2012

Cool mornings greet us and ensure a leisurely start to the day. Once underway we stop for lunch then make a few more k's before calling it a day mid afternoon. Build a fire, cook, take in the scenery and retire for the day. This has become our routine – plus we try and stop so that the morning sun hits the boat early and starts to warm us up and dry the boat off. I seem to have got the hang of the camp oven and can bake bread and scones quite well. Travelled through The Narrows which was thick with forest and littered with significant snags - at one point we had to sneak through a narrow gap between two large trees that had fallen into the water; one fallen from each side of the river bank.

2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> July 2012



The river red gum forests are magnificent, thick and imposing. The bird life is plentiful and we are doing our best to identify as many as possible. We were very pleased to spot a White Bellied Sea Eagle and have also seen Falcons, Eagles, Wrens, Herons, numerous types of Ducks, Swifts etc. On the wildlife front we've seen Kangaroos, Wallabies, a Koala and some water based marsupials or maybe Platypus' (we hope). We've hardly seen any other boats and only one houseboat on the move but this changed as we approached Echuca. Once at Echuca we struggled to find a place to moor the boat (no public moorings like at Goolwa and elsewhere in SA) and settled for a spot in front of a





caravan park but next moved the boat to the foreshore near the main ramp. Brian caught the bus back to Yarrawonga and picked up the car and trailer. We then made arrangements with a nearby caravan park to use their facilities and did the unavoidable chores – washing, dump station, topped up the water tanks, fetched fuel and some extra fresh provisions. Having the car handy made this all very convenient. Then Brian drove to Swan Hill, stored the car and trailer at another caravan park and caught the train and bus back to Echuca and we were on our way again.

6<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> July 2012

Motor not running as well as we would like, considering it had a major service before we left; the spark plugs keep fouling but we have spares so in they went. During a fuel tank change we let Elanora drift in the current and we calculated the river is running at about 3 knots so even at low revs we are doing about 6 (10kms) an hour. 2000 kms (not including the Murrumbidge or the Darling) at 10kms an hour makes 200 hours. We travel around 3 or 4 hours a day so we reckon we should be home mid to late August. Arrived at Torrumbarry in the afternoon, made arrangements for our lockage at 0930 the next day. Once inside the lock and halfway through the process the power went out and we were locked in the lock for about 2 hours. A day or so later we reached Barham/Koondrook and as we approached the bridge were dismayed to find the gap between the water and bridge very small. We pulled over and Brian measured it – barely more than 2 metres. We had to dismantle the bimini, solar panel, aerials and targer and had about 100mm to spare as we nervously slipped under. There was no chance of having the lift span raised as it is out of order and has been for some time! Other similarly low bridges are ahead – Gonn Crossing, Swan Hill, Tooleybuc and Nyah but I was told by someone from the RTA (now RMS) that Barham was the worst so if we could make it through that we'd be ok with the rest. Once at Swan Hill we pulled up in front of the caravan park where the

car and trailer are and went about some reprovisioning.

