

Moreton's Salty Dozen.

By Eddie Safarik

I've carried around my "ideal" recipe of what a great all encompassing club event should be for some time. Elements of challenging, even gender mix, broad age range and skill levels, multiple clubs represented, quality learning through doing and gleaning from many, social, safe, fun, great food and weather, chilled and inclusive. The recent Moreton training weekend seemed to tick those things off nicely.



Michael wasn't a member of any club but wanted to come along for the grade 2 crossing from Bribie in his new sea kayak. This made me nervous, not just because his emails were signed off with Michael... Barrister. It seems this is usually how the first paragraph of trip disaster stories read. Michael produced verifiable log entries of some of his paddles in sea kayaks, joined the QSKC and went through a lot of effort to be eligible and also to get up to the starting line from Ballina. I thought back to when I was a new clubby and Silvio allowed me to come across to Moreton with his group as an unknown, so after a weather check Michael was given the green light and was on the team too. Silvia, April, Susan, Will, sick but still up for it, Michael, Gary and I left Woorim about an hour before low tide after talking through and sharing some safety, risks and navigation points. We still had 7 paddlers when we looked left and right at the start and at the completion of the shipping lane area. We marveled at how large and fast the container ships are and at how handy it is to know which side of the nav marks they will be travelling on. The incoming tide and wind sent us southwards towards the wrecks at about 8-9klmph. We arrived at exactly our 2pm eta. Kaye, Cheryl, Dayna, Bruce and Gil met us on the wrecks beach after a paddle up to Bulwer. Greetings, communal camping, sundowners, catch ups, laughs, cold beer, red wine and rib on the bone steak later the general consensus was we were on island time so the idea of an early morning dash to the sand hills was dashed for training and activities around camp the next morning.

The wrecks gave up some brilliant freediving and sea kayak snorkeling and maneuvering opportunities. There was a morning session of skills where I was taught balance in exchange for a whacky solution to head wind paddling, rescues and sea kayak handling. Lunch was next, social and long. Michael and new member Gil, a firey and a mate Chris Daniel's were super keen to get their teeth into the grade 2 assessment. They seemed to forget about island time so we carried our kayaks past the suitably lounged team and got stuck into an afternoon grade 2 assessment session.

Repeat the previous evening activities + some extra kayakers and campers on the beach for sundowners.

After an early breakfast the crossing team filled their nav tool boxes with new ideas and took the reins for the crossing back to Woorim. Both Gil and Michael were keen to complete their grade 2 assessments in the Bribie surf. So when Will was too sick to paddle back Gil came off the bench as his replacement and Will took the ferry and drove Gil's car up to Bribie. We jumped on the Moreton tidal express up to Cowan. The weather continued to smile as we paddled. The water was so clear it was like we were

hovering on a cushion of air. We snacked by the remains of an historic Cowan gun battery, it had strayed much closer to the sea than its 1940s footings had prepared for. We smiled when we noticed the graffiti "Suzie was here" just above Susan. Our navigators used the tide to get us back across to Bribie quickly and safely. Both Gill and Michael did the club proud with their surfing prowess and passed their grade 2 assessment with flying colours! Bang! Straight into it, grade 2 and a first time Moreton Crossing in one weekend!

Will arrived at Woorim pretty much exactly when we did. It was one of those balanced, "even Steven" trips.

The team gender mix was 6/6. The age range was about 50 years between the youngest and eldest paddler and there were 4 clubs represented. The great weather certainly played a big positive factor in the mix too, the weekend seemed to "morph" into goodness. From my perspective as a QSKC trip leader and AC Sea Instructor the outcomes were very rewarding and satisfying to see. Thank you for a great weekend to the funtastic, chilled and salt-seasoned "Moreton Dozen".

Learning point. Plan but not too much, leave some space for alchemy.









