

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> January**  
**Night Paddle Shorncliffe to Woody Pt and return**  
**(Robyn)**

Five thirty saw four paddlers gathering their gear at the boat ramp at Shorncliffe, Ian, Matt, Robyn and Nev. The wind was still whipping up the white caps round at Sandgate, 15kn at least, but ever hopeful I believed it would die off by dark. (It didn't.)



I wondered what sort of paddle this would be.... On the planet that I come from (Claytonia) a night paddle before the full moon means merriment, a nice dinner sitting at a moonlit picnic table, a late return. So I had brought smoked tassie salmon and a couple of (light) beers. Nev set me straight. 'You won't need that, I'm not taking anything.' I put it all back in the car and pocketed a couple of muesli bars.

After a thorough gear check (all round white light, head torch for each of us, usual safety gear etc) we set off. Once out past the channel markers we cut the corner through some white caps and headed north across Bramble Bay.

The wind was practically on our nose all the way, probably 15 kn. My bow, now bereft of ballast, bounced around in the waves. It was hard work and I probably held people back a bit. It took us one hour forty minutes to reach Woody Point, a distance of 8.3 kilometres, the last third of which was covered in the dark.

I use the term 'dark' reservedly, as there was sufficient light from the port, piers and bridges and the bay suburbs to provide good references all the way. We didn't see any other boat traffic during the trip outside of the channel at Cabbage Tree Ck.



The whole experience became dreamlike and surreal as we approached the floodlit structure of the pier at Woody Pt, where fisher folk were most intrigued to see us appear out of the darkness. At the boat ramp we took a quick break, stretched our legs and turned around.

It was a great ride back with the wind continuing on our backs although it did abate somewhat. The moon was too high in the sky to provide any definition to the oncoming waves from the northeast. So, without a lot of planning, we responded blindly, or shall we say intuitively, from the hips to the surges coming through on our stern quarter. An interesting exercise.



The elapsed time for the return journey was just over an hour. Again we cut the corner at Shorncliffe and surfed into the protection of the channel. We were all packed up and on our way before ten.

I enjoyed this paddle hugely and recommend it unreservedly. I think that Nev will be offering it regularly when he returns from the west. There is plenty of parking and the facilities are good for cleaning up efficiently on the return. The beers weren't wasted, we downed them afterwards.

Thanks Nev.

