



## EBAA Visits: Lake Burley Griffin Cruises - Canberra

In a feature that is new to the EBAA website, we are visiting members' businesses on a regular basis. First in this series, we catch up with Jim Paterson and Garnett Znidaric from Lake Cruises in Canberra.

It is 30C with a clear blue sky when I walk onto the pontoon behind the National Museum which is the home base for most of the tour operators on Canberra's Lake Burley Griffin. Jim, a tall flamboyant gentleman with impressive moustache greets me and welcomes me onboard his Edwardian style electric launch 'Cygnet'; the first 'all electric' commercial vessel on the Lake. Dressed in overalls, he and Garnett were just about to top up the water level of the battery bank, and once this is done we set sail aboard this comfy boat which was launched in 2003 after a conversion from the steam launch 'Jenny'. As we set off from the wharf, Jim explains that his boat is powered by an original Lynch motor of 6Kw. It is running from a double 48V battery bank, at 160Ah each which gives more than enough cruising time to do the scheduled 6 daily sightseeing trips around the lake of 45 mins duration each.



The main reason Jim chose electric propulsion for his boat becomes obvious as we go around the Lake. Because petrol powered craft are prohibited by the National Capital Authority, there are no speed boats in Canberra. The only sound we can hear as we float past Canberra's icons such as the National Library, Captain Cook memorial jet and the Carrillion is the sound of water caressing the hull of the boat. This is electric boating how it should be; enjoy the surroundings at a leisurely pace, in complete silence. The electric motor makes the boat ideal for the wetland cruises that it conducts on request. Without the noise and fumes of a combustion engine wildlife is not scared away so the 'Cygnet' is ideal for bird watching as it glides through the surroundings without leaving a trace, allowing for close encounters and some treasured snaps.



The Lynch motor is very efficient. While the top speed performance of equals the thrust of approximately a 10HP diesel motor, Garnett, who mostly skippers the boat, usually has the throttle set at only about 20 Amps to get a decent cruising speed of around 4 knots. The 18 x 16, 3 bladed prop gives a quick acceleration and although the strong headwinds that the Lake sees from time to time require a few more Amps to maintain the pace the set up is ample for commercial use on the Lake.

Since they started operating in 2003, a petrol powered boat has been added to the fleet, but Jim and Garnett recognise that electric is the preferred way of boating in Canberra. Recently they added a new vessel to the fleet, the 'Gull' and plans are on the table to convert this boat to electric drive too. We can only look forward to more electric boats operating on Lake Burley Griffin.

Lake Burley Griffin Cruises operates 7 days a week, with all cruises departing from the Acton Ferry Terminal, Barrine Drive, Acton. See for more information: [www.lakecruises.com.au](http://www.lakecruises.com.au) or contact Jim on 0419 418 846.

*(text & photos: Steven Mullie)*