

# HOW IT ALL STARTED

## **INTERNATIONAL**

The International Fellowship of Flying Rotarians (IFFR) was formally organised in Seattle, Washington, U.S.A. on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1965, through the efforts of Mr. E. Edison Kennell. It endeavours to bring Rotary members, with present or past association with aviation, from Rotary Clubs of the World, together in fellowship.

Although we are a flying group, the aircraft is used as a means to bring Rotarians from distant places to join in a common fellowship. The fact that some came by car, some are members of the RV fellowship and bring their Home on wheels, and some even come by motor bike, does not detract in any way from the principles of IFFR or reduce the extent of the fellowship.

There are approximately 1400 members worldwide of which 200 come from Australia and New Zealand, making us the largest membership outside the U.S.A.

## **AUSTRALIA section**

(Refer to Stow Kentish, David Riley, Brian Condon)

The earliest known member was Ron Stone (No. 706) which puts him in the late 60s. Other early members were Stow Kentish, Frank Sharpe, Geoff Stevens, Clive Woolcott, and Brian Condon.

Brian Bloxsom attended a number of Rotary International Conventions in the mid 70's and there he met a Vic Brasher from Houston who was the Chairman of the IFFR which Brian had earlier joined. Vic suggested that Brian start an Australian District of the IFFR, and asked him to organise the few Aussies who were members, to try to increase the membership. Vic also appointed Brian to the International board of the IFFR.

Brian called an inaugural meeting at his home at which Brian, Ken Green, Bill Benbow, Dick Gilford and Sheldon Chadwick attended. Sir Frank Sharpe was appointed as the first President of the Australian section. Ken Green proposed the idea of a banner and undertook to prepare a design and have it produced; the fact that Ken trained on a Cessna had an influence on the design. Sheldon recalls presenting a banner to the World Chairman, Marcus Crotts, in 1981. He was so impressed that he proceeded to have one produced for his own state.

In 1974 Brian Bloxsom was appointed Chairman, and Sheldon Chadwick acted as convener of the fly-ins. Progress was slow at first until they established a good contact with Ward Derks, who took over as Secretary. With Ward they were able to arrange for the issue of blocks of numbers for issue in Australia, the collection of dues in Australia and

forwarding to USA each year. Brian said "*IFFR in Australia has been a great success – from just a handful of members in those days to what we are today with fly-ins all around the country*". Two members have served as World Presidents; Brian Condon in 1994-1996, and Ern Dawes in 1998-2000.

In 1988, to celebrate the bi-centenary of the settlement of our country, we conducted a round Australia flight, which was a huge success.

## **NEW ZEALAND section**

(Refer to Harry Maidment, Graham Gimblett, Phil Pacey)

Prior to the World Convention in Taipei, in June 1994, the Condons and McClures were doing a sightseeing tour of the island when they met Graham Gimblett who was doing the same tour in transit to meet his wife and friends, for a holiday in Hong Kong. As Graham was on his own, the two Australians soon suggested he join them for a meal. The ensuing conversation was not long establishing what each was doing and that they were all Rotarians. The discussion then turned to hobbies and it was soon discovered they were all pilots. Brian Condon, being World President of IFFR at the time, ordered a further round of drinks and asked Graham if he would start up a New Zealand section, with the assistance of Australian IFFR members. From the first mention to Graham about the IFFR he saw this as a new interest in Rotary, accepted the challenge, and agreed to do what he could in the formation of a new section in his country.

Sure enough a month later after arriving home in New Zealand, Brian Condon made contact and the phone and fax got busy. Graham Gimblett reported that there were 240 Rotary Clubs in N.Z., and about 60 Rotarians had shown interest in IFFR. A committee was set up and a keen group was formed. A membership circular was put together and with the help of the District Governors assisting with free distribution, 500 forms were sent, with 40 expressions of interest from Rotarians being returned. Meanwhile the McClures suggested if the Gimblett's could get to Melbourne, they would take them to Western Australia to Manjimup, to experience a fly-in, which Graham did; what a great week that was. From there, there was no looking back.

Graham contacted many and decided on the weekend of the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> February 1995 to meet at the Paraparaumu airfield which was to be the venue of an airshow. Unfortunately this was the Waitangi holiday weekend and many had other arrangements, so only 7 out of the 40 expressions of interest could attend. At that first fly-in there were more Australians than New Zealanders, but it was at that meeting that the NZ section was formed, Captain Brian Souter, an ex Air New Zealand Captain, accepted the position of first President, and a committee was selected. Harry Maidment from Auckland left at 2:00 a.m. in the morning to drive down to be at the meeting which was a valiant effort. He is an aircraft dealer and has very close ties with the industry. We are very fortunate that he accepted the position of Secretary/Treasurer. The Australians that flew over were Ern, Nola & Peter Dawes, Brian & Joyce Condon, Malcolm & Phyllis McClure, Barry and Sally Townsend, Graham Mockridge and Rob and Nancy Taylor. Edward Mason was our only New Zealand member at

the beginning of the year but was currently the District Governor and unable to attend. He intimated that he certainly would assist when he completed his term. New Zealand is a very aeronautical country and members will get much pleasure from the Rotary and Aviation combination.

It was agreed to hold a fly-in on the 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> August 1995, at Feilding, which is just north of Palmerston North in the southern part of the north island.

### **AVIATION HISTORY KIWI INGENUITY**

When travelling through the south Canterbury countryside of New Zealand, one could be forgiven for not noticing a roadside memorial of an ancient flying machine mounted on a pole. After all it is not marked on a map and even Watohi, the place where it stands, is absent from all but the more detailed maps of the area. The low profile of this memorial is an apt reflection of the person to whom it commemorates. A man of genius who without financial means sought to fly, while doing so was still seen as the work of the devil, in the eyes of those around him.

Whether Richard Pearce was the first person to fly a powered aircraft is still conjecture. However what is certain is that not only did Pearce construct his own airframe but also built his own engines. It was not until 1971 that remains of his first engine were found in the same rubbish dump as that where another one had been discovered 13 years earlier. Now residing at the Museum of Transport and Technology in Auckland are the 4 engines Pearce constructed. Information about Pearce's flight was almost as difficult to obtain as that of his engineering. However it now seems clear that his first powered flight was on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1902. This attempt ended on top of a 12 foot high gorse hedge on the boundary of the family farm; the exact location and elevation of the memorial to his efforts erected by local residents on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1979.

There followed more flights with the first properly controlled one on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1903 over a distance 318 mile. It matters little whether people flew before the Wright Brothers or not, but what does matter is that he did it in rural New Zealand, virtually single handed, and it worked.



FLY-INS  
AUSTRALIA and NEW ZEALAND

## ***WALGETT (NSW) FLY-IN***

**1974**

This was the first Australian fly-in and included a bus trip to Lightning Ridge. Unfortunately we have no record of that event.

## ***ALICE SPRINGS & AYRES ROCK (NT) FLY-IN***

**April 1975**

Alice Springs and Ayres Rock was the venue for our first major flyaway, which was organised by Sheldon Chadwick well guided by our President Brian Bloxom. The group assembled at Broken Hill on the 20<sup>th</sup> for sightseeing and a meeting with the local Rotary Club. On Tuesday the 23<sup>rd</sup> the group flew onto Alice Springs and had an evening meeting with the Stuart Alice Springs Rotary Club. The Alice Springs Rotary Club organised sightseeing for the next day followed by another meeting. Friday saw the group fly to Ayres Rock and then fly home the following day. Five aircraft and about 20 members and friends had a very enjoyable time.

## ***MILDURA (Vic) FLY-IN***

**August 1975**

Mildura was the target for nine aircraft and 44 persons on another interest packed weekend. We had a very enjoyable meeting with the Rotary Club of Mildura, and they combined to make this a memorable time of fellowship and interest. This was complemented by a visit to the Warbirds museum. Mildura was an important airfield during the Second World War.

## ***NEWCASTLE (NSW) FLY-IN***

**February 1976**

Newcastle is the home of Dick Gilford and he did his usual excellent job in organising the fly-in to Newcastle, with the help of Sheldon Chadwick. Friday evening saw the crews assemble for a barbeque. Saturday was spent sightseeing followed by a cruise on Lake Macquarie aboard the “Wangi Queen” with members of the Adamstown Rotary Club, Rotoract, and Lions Club? The weekend culminated with a farewell dinner at the “Squid’s Ink” ready for an early departure Monday morning.

## ***MOUNT ISA (Qld) FLY-IN***

**August 1976**

The Mount Isa Safari had the object of visiting the Rotary Rodeo weekend, which was well planned by Frank D'Arcy and Dick Gilford. An excellent time was enjoyed by those who flew into Mt Isa. Several aircraft flew in from the East that were supplemented by a team of three aircraft and 12 Rotarians from Port Pirie. Unfortunately Shel Chadwick had a heavy landing at Birdsville and damaged his nose wheel, which necessitated him thumbing a ride to Isa.

The weekend started with a Rotary dinner followed by a street carnival and two days of rodeo. The Port Pirie crew had more experiences, as they were away ten days hence this story will cover their exploits. On Saturday C-182 VH-TIN, C172 VH-FYD and C172 VH-PFG left Port Pirie and flew to Oodnadatta for fuel before proceeding to Alice Springs. Sunday was a leisurely flight to Wauchope Well and then to Katherine. Monday was spent touring the district plus a visit to Pandamus, a station on the Katherine River belonging to Vern Potter and Brian Condon, and then the famous Katherine Gorge just down the road. Next day we flew to a station down the track to meet old friends and lift up some fuel. Then onto Mount Isa where we started to refuel our aircraft, which was fairly close to a Fokker Friendship, which was unloading passengers. Next thing there was a massive evacuation and scattering from that aircraft as there had been a bomb scare on the Friendship resulting in us making a very hasty retreat with our aircraft. The Friendship was taxied down to the end of the runway and status quo was restored.

Following Mount Isa we flew down to Birdsville for fuel and then onto Innamincka. This proved to be a different night because we retired to four rooms, which held three persons each. Keith Davill was snoozing when a fellow who came into the room and said that he was staying for the night. As he was carrying a gun Keith did not argue but let him stay, and fortunately they got through the night. It was subsequently discovered that the fellow was not all there, so it was a precarious situation. The following day we completed the journey back to Port Pirie and all agreed that it was a trip second to none. Total flying time was 31 hours.

## ***CONDOBOLIN (NSW) FLY-IN***

**March 1977**

Condobolin was handed to John Crosby who did a good job in planning another successful meeting. Program started with a gathering at the RSL Club to meet all the visitors. Next day was filled with a visit to a mixed farming property, followed by a sandwich lunch at John Crosby's home. The Condobolin Rotary hosted that evening the visitors at the Conference Hall at the Research Station.

On Sunday further visits were made round the district, followed by a lunch hosted by the Condobolin Aero Club, prior to all departing for home.

### ***LINDERMAN ISLAND FLY-IN***

#### **October 1977**

Lindeman Island was an unusual destination for the IFFR as it coincided with a meeting of AOPA. It was planned this way as an experiment, and as a result it was decided that in the future that we would try and restrict events to our own members. It was a matter of each group having its own agenda. As there is nowhere else to go we shared the weekend.

Most unusual was that Keith Davill from Port Pirie took delivery of a brand new C-182, VH-DYG at Lindeman Island, leaving behind C-206 VH-RFX, which was on loan to Keith.

### ***BENDIGO (Vic) FLY-IN***

#### **March 1978**

Bendigo was in the capable hands of Rob Herriott and as usual we experienced an interesting visit. Some 33 attended. After settling in we had a night of fellowship with our old friends.

Next day we visited the Cathedral and walked through the streets of the city. Then we proceeded to the Department of Agriculture Laboratories and Veterinary facilities, culminating in lunch at their cafeteria, arranged by the Bendigo Rotary Club. In the afternoon we visited the Pottery, after which we proceeded to the Herriot house for a monster barbeque.

Next day we visited the Dai Gum San Wax Works Museum, and then wandered through the Roslyn Park. We visited the Bendigo Town Hall to see an exhibition of Chinese Artefacts, followed by a smorgasbord Chinese meal. After lunch we went down the Central Deborah Mine, which was the last one to close in Bendigo. We then went for a tram ride on an old Birney Tram, which was an old toast rack type. The day

finished with a Barbeque by our hosts the Bendigo Flying Club.

### ***PORT PIRIE (SA) FLY-IN***

#### **October 1978**

Port Pirie was selected as the next fly-in and this was organised by Brian Condon. It may have been too far for some, as we only had five aircraft and 14 people make the trip. After settling in we assembled at the Golf Club for a meal and fellowship.

A tour of the town was made next morning and the afternoon was taken up with a tour of the BHAS Smelters, which is the largest lead smelting works in the world. The Rotary Club of Port Pirie hosted us for the evening dinner.

Next day we travelled to Mambray Creek for a Barbeque lunch and after visiting Port Germein we returned to Keith Davill's for a Fellowship evening. As all were going east they had favourable tail winds for their trip home.

### ***DUBBO (NSW) FLY-IN***

#### **March 1979**

The Dubbo fly-in was a somewhat different occasion because it coincided with their District Conference. Our members are used to adapting to various conditions, and enjoyed the weekend regardless. No official records are available hence nothing to report, except that 61 were present. We had lunch with the local Rotarians, but as they were very involved with the Conference, very little interaction took place. As previously mentioned an event for members only is the most successful way of organising a fly-in.

### ***ALBURY (NSW) FLY-IN***

#### **June 1979**

Albury Wodonga was in the capable hands of Ian and Roma. This interesting area of Australia was the venue for some 32 visitors. We visited wineries and met that evening at David and Elaine Mann's Pad for a wine and casserole dinner. Sunday saw us travel to the Hume Weir

ending up at Drage's Museum at which a Vintage Aircraft Fly-in was taking place. That evening Dick Boehm showed a film on his flying an Aztec home from USA via Iceland. Ian and Roma entertained us that evening with a supper and excerpts of their flight to and from England.

### ***WARNNAMBOOL (Vic) FLY-IN***

#### **August 1980**

Warnnambool fly-in was in the hands of Bill Bell and Dick Boehm. On arrival they had transport organised take us to our motels for a fellowship evening. Next day we met at the airport for a Barbeque luncheon followed by a visit to Tower Hill and then on to the Tourist Information Centre for a presentation of a video film on the District. Then we moved on to Flagstaff Hill, Hopkins Falls and Terang. Then we proceeded to Keayang for a meal and Woolshed Dance. Sunday saw us back at the Aero Club for fellowship and a film on one of our member's flight from USA to Europe and Australia.

### ***CHERIBAH FLY-IN***

#### **May 1981**

David Riley arranged an interesting weekend to the mountain resort in the ranges east of Brisbane, for 10 aircraft and 45 participants. As the venue was somewhat isolated we enjoyed good fellowship, and spent much of the time bush walking. The strip was not particularly easy to find and the two aircraft from Port Pirie, arriving just on last light, could not find the strip, and had to a divert to Warwick. There were no lights at the field at Warwick and being pitch black the landing was rather challenging. Next day we had a trip back to Brisbane by road and finished up flying with a C150, C172, and C182 in line. Our new friend from Brisbane in the C150 could not find the Cheribah strip, the situation made all the more interesting as the C150 could not go fast enough and the C182 could not slow down enough.

### ***MELBOURNE (Vic) FLY-ABOUT***

#### **November 1981**

Melbourne Pacific Conference was a diversion for our members. While not an organised fly-in we all met together with the idea of providing a flying program at the Mornington Barbeque, which was held at the Mornington Racecourse, and attended by most of the delegates at

the Conference. An interesting program was offered with the following events taking place. Firstly a helicopter air medical evacuation took place, featuring a Bell 206 Jet Ranger. This was followed by a Banner Tow with a Dornier 27A4. Then the IFFR conducted a flypast with 9 aircraft. Viz a Grumman AA-18, B76, PA 32260, two C172s, C177-RG, C206, C207, and a C210. Next the Skydancers Co-ordinated Aerobatics followed a Gulfstream handling demonstration. To close the program a Parachute drop was made to the racecourse. The flying program was organised by David Riley, Ray Tinker, and Bill Smart. They did an excellent job as they met many obstacles mainly from the Department of Aviation, which resulted in an “on again”, “off again”, “on again” situation which was not resolved until the last minute. Even then one of our members was unable to participate because he was just a bit late in registering. We certainly achieved our object of demonstrating the use and versatility of aircraft.

### ***KHANCOBAN FLY-IN***

#### **April 1982**

9 aircraft and 31 people attended the very interesting visit to Khancoban. Situated in the Snowy Mountains it was part of the Snowy River Hydro scheme. We were able to tour the area in the mountains and visit parts of the scheme. A visit to a power station was the highlight and we also were able to visit the control centre. This was worth the trip alone, and gave us an idea of the enormity of the whole project. It again emphasised the opportunities that we enjoy when we travel this vast continent. Being in a resort brought us closer together, in what is a close family situation and good fellowship. Following the visit some aircraft continued onto Canberra for a couple of days. The flying was different for some members who are used to flying in flat country, and fortunately the weather held.

### ***WALGETT & LIGHTNING RIDGE (NSW) FLY-IN***

#### **October 1982**

We are indebted to Robert Tighe for organising this trip to central North West New South Wales. 14 aircraft and 50 members and friends spent a very enjoyable weekend in this flat challenging country. Friday saw many friendships renewed, and new ones made. We met at the Walgett Aero Club whose members provided us with an afternoon Barbeque, and then provided transport to our motels.

On Saturday, after a scenic flight to Narren Lake and Grawin, we finished up in Lightning Ridge for a tour around the diggings and

inspection of the fields. Evening dinner was held at the Bowling Club to the accompaniment of the Shin Crackers Band, then we settled into local accommodation for the night.

On Sunday morning there was another inspection of the mines. After our Annual General Meeting we dispersed in many directions for our respective homes, after what was agreed to be a most enjoyable fly-in.

## ***MALLACOOTA FLY-IN***

### **April 1983**

This fly-in turned out to be something different from our expectations with mixed results. There were 18 aircraft registered to arrive with 58 passengers, but unfortunately the weather kept 5 aircraft away. Those that did arrive had some challenging moments. On arrival Lochard Captain Mal, who provided afternoon tea, welcomed us. The Mallecoota Flag Inn provided transport to their Motel. As there was no Rotary Club in town we were able to have an informal time together, starting with the Friday evening fellowship dinner.

The Saturday feature was a trip across the lake on the Lochard, with a Barbeque lunch at Allen's Head and a tour of the bottom and top lakes. On Saturday evening we had another fellowship dinner, with singsong and dancing. That night we were treated to a mini cyclone, which dumped, trees everywhere plus 150mm of rain. Next morning we went to the airport and found our aircraft had been strewn round the airport. Obviously there was no flying that day. This weather hung on and only the IFR pilots were able to get away.

On Monday morning, when we surveyed the scene, it was much similar. Talking to the locals they casually looked out the window and commented no flying today, the seagulls are grounded. This went on each day until Thursday and a glance outside saw the seagulls in the air so we decided to leave. It was a challenging flight out as it was clear above the airport but not for far. Three of us set out west against a 50-knot headwind, and flew on top all the way to Shepparton, where we had to refuel because of the slow trip. Mallecoota is an interesting area and we can imagine the fun that they would have had during the war. There was a very good strip used by the RAAF during the war for mine laying and reconnaissance. Many bats there occupy the mine holding bunkers. The end of the strip had a huge crater where an aircraft loaded with mines crashed when coming in to land; it sure was not the place to try a short landing.

## ***MAROOCHYDORE (Qld) FLY-IN***

### **October 1983**

14 aircraft and 48 personnel participated. This was another occasion when our fly-in coincided with another event; the AOPA meeting was being held at the same time. It proved that you can't run two events together as each has its own schedule. Upon arrival we were transported to the Twin Pines Motel in Mooloolaba and then spent the evening at the Fronds Seafood Restaurant.

Next day we joined a bus tour round the area and visited the Suncoast Pioneer Village and Noosa Heads, stopping for lunch at the Sunshine plantation, home of the Big Pineapple. We continued through the beautiful Glasshouse Mountains and arrived back in time for an evening dinner with live entertainment.

## ***KANGAROO ISLAND (SA) FLY-IN***

### **April 1984**

Kangaroo Island, located south of Adelaide in South Australia, was the venue for our fly-in. A total of 16 aircraft and 57 people participated in another variation of our now established excellent fellowship functions. After settling in on arrival we spent the evening at dinner with the Kangaroo Island Rotary Club. It happened that Brian's father Tiny turned 85 that day and a beautiful birthday cake was presented to him to be shared by all present.

Next day we had an interesting tour of the island, visiting Seal Bay Conservation Park with its hundreds of seals lazing on the beach. Lunch was served in Flinders Chase National Park. On arrival kangaroos and emus quickly surrounded everybody, obviously knowing where their next meal was coming from. In fact the animals cause such a nuisance that people are shown into a roofed compound designed to keep the animals out so that meals can be eaten in peace. After lunch we visited Remarkable Rocks where gigantic boulders have been sculptured by the elements and seem to defy gravity the way they balance precariously with very little surface contact. Then on to Cape Du Couedic and Admiral Arch. On return, we joined the local Rotarians for a barbeque.

Sunday saw some of the more adventurous. experience the joys of Kangaroo Island fishing, which is always a fisherman's dream. Then it was time to fire up and return to our widespread homes. Kangaroo Island is still a sparsely populated large island with many natural unspoilt features, and an ideal place for a laid back holiday.

## ***CESSNOCK (NSW) FLY-IN***

### **September 1984**

Cessnock fly-in arrangements were in the very capable hands of Steve Jackson. 11 aircraft and 54 persons journeyed to the Hunter Valley. We stayed at the Pokolbin Wine Village Motor Inn located in the centre of the vineyards. After settling in we were transported to a deer farm where we participated in a very enjoyable Hungi. Next morning we went to the Pelton Colliery to inspect the operation and this included, for some, a trip underground, where they witnessed Long Wall mining. The long wall is a million ton block of coal 150m wide x 2km long and 3.2m high. We then continued along a convict constructed, road built in 1834, to the historic village of Wollombi, and then to the historic St John's Church. Lunch was at the Tamberline vineyards. The afternoon started with a visit to Tyrells winery that was very interesting in that they are still using the original methods developed a hundred years earlier. There were earth floors and no pumps were used as all products were gravitated through the winery. Local Rotarians joined us for an excellent evening in the cellar of Drayton's Winery dining among the casks. The hosts Reg Drayton and his wife, who were the patriarchs of the Drayton family, were unfortunately lost on a flight when a Kingair came down in the ocean en route to Lord Howe Island; a tragedy for such a fine couple.

Sunday saw us heading to our various homes but Brian and his crew in C172 VH-IGD diverted and flew to Sydney and landed at Kingsford Smith Airport. This was a great experience as we were orbited around the Bahia Temple before proceeding to an orbit by the Harbour Bridge before landing at Sydney. Our little puddle jumper looked very much out of place in the park with all the twins and jets. Days later on departure we were at the hold point where we waited for QF2 a 747 from London to land. It was awesome to see that big bird go over the top of us before we headed out to the west where we belonged.

## ***LATROBE VALLEY (Vic) FLY-IN***

### **April 1985**

Latrobe Valley fly-in was an excellent weekend, very ably hosted and organised by Ray Dowsett. Some 20 aircraft and 74 persons attended and this was our largest gathering since inception. Ray was a helicopter pilot with the National Safety Council, which had its headquarters in the Latrobe Valley. In a cloud of controversy the organisation was declared

bankrupt due to much publicised controversial actions of its founder. Upon arrival and during the evening the Latrobe Valley Aero Club hosted us. We stayed at the Del Spana Motel.

Next morning we were transported to the State Electricity Commission Visitors Centre for a briefing and description of the operations in the area. We then descended on Darkie Wilson's property on the Morwell River for a barbeque luncheon before moving on to the LVA Airport. A tour was made of the NSCA facilities, followed by a flying display using the fixed wing aircraft and helicopters used in rescue work. Then back to Morwell to view the remote sensing unit and Helicopter Underwater Escape Trainer demonstration. The equipment was certainly state of the art and it is a pity that the operation came to such a sad end. The Hazelwood Rotary Club organised a Ladies night for members and visitors.

On Sunday morning after the meeting and luncheon we departed our various ways to be confronted with much nasty weather. After dodging thunderstorms and very strong northerly and westerly winds, and some delays, we finally made it home. We only just got out in time as the wether really closed in after we left, and we could have been delayed for days.

### ***BROKEN HILL (NSW) FLY-IN*** **September 1985**

White Cliffs, Broken Hill and Arkaroola. This would have to be our most ambitious event since our inauguration, and was very capably handled by Bob Stewart and Bruce Church. Some 26 aircraft and 100 visitors met to enjoy a very different gathering.

On Thursday, we started by meeting at White Cliffs, a far western opal mining field, where Bruce arranged accommodation at the hotel and in his and other dugouts. This is 100 kms North West of Wilcannia. Our whirlwind tour took us to Christies Rocks, Dalby Pottery, Edie and Tot White's dugout, Craft Centre, a Plesiosaur whose 100 million year old skeleton is the most complete yet found, then Lucky Strike followed by an inspection of the Solar Power Station with its 14 huge mirrored dishes, constructed as the first experimental solar power unit. It is amazing how people can make an isolated desolate area so comfortable and interesting.

Next day we flew into Broken Hill to meet the many other visitors. That evening we met at the Masonic Club for fellowship and a meal, and the Rotaractors ably attended the bar. Members from

Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Western Australia attended. Next morning we had a three-hour tour of the City, which included a visit to Pro Hart's Gallery, and again the Rotaractors catered for a barbeque luncheon in the Zinc Corporation Picnic Park. That afternoon we donned miner's gear, protective coat, miner's hard hats, and heavy belt with even heavier lead acid battery on it serving the miner's lamp, plus heavy boots. We were loaded into a very cosy cage for the trip underground at Delprates mine to the 400-foot level. Original machinery was demonstrated, and a few had a go at the pneumatic drill. It is only in recent times that females were allowed underground, and this was an extremely policed rule. That evening Broken Hill and Broken Hill South Rotarians hosted us at the RSL Club. Our guest speaker was one of the Flying Doctors.

Next morning it was up and at it again with breakfast at several of the Clubs and then a bus trip to Silverton, a ghost town 20 kilometres out, where silver mines once had several thousand people living in a canvas city. This was a favourite place for making numerous Australian films, and has many features of interest for tourists. It is nothing for a local horse to stick its head in the door of the pub. Back to the Flying Doctor Base for a video presentation including School of the Air and luncheon before we departed either for home or Arkaroola in the Flinders Ranges.

The entry to Arkaroola was hilarious. It is a short strip and requires considerable skill to negotiate, and upon landing we were mustered and led to the immigration counter, which was a bench on the bare landscape. A sniffer dog did its rounds and a one stand dunny was located alongside. The attendants were suitably dressed to put us through our immigration paces, and it all turned out to be a laugh a minute. That evening we had a sumptuous dinner to be in good spirit for the Ridge Top Tour next morning. This was really something, as the track out was at times on razor back ridges and extremely steep, passing through very picturesque and rugged country. The view from the peak was unique as you looked out towards Lake Frome. It is a must for anyone who ever has the chance to visit Arkaroola. We said fond farewell to all, and we proceeded to our respective destinations, hailing this as a unique flying experience.

## ***HERVEY BAY FLY-IN***

### **April 1986**

The fly-in to Hervey Bay, located on the central Queensland coast adjacent to Fraser Island, attracted 22 aircraft and 84 persons to this real

fellowship adventure, where we were well looked after by the two local Rotary Clubs. We explored the area in general, but the main attraction was the visit to Fraser Island on the Saturday. This is the largest sand island in the world and is still in pristine condition. Regular aircraft flights are made from the mainland, landing on the beautiful firm sandy beach. This beach has the wreck of a New Zealand freighter, slowly rusting away. Another feature of interest was the coloured sand cliffs, as well as fresh water lakes and pools. One beach had thousands of small soldier crabs creeping up to the shore. The two Rotary Clubs combined their meetings to join with us for our official dinner on Saturday night. Once again an excellent fly-in.

## ***MILDURA FLY-IN***

### **September 1986**

Our late member Viv Elliott did a grand job of arranging this event for arrival of 16 aircraft and 69 members and friends. Mildura Aero Club and Irymple Rotary Club organised our local travel, airport arrangements, and accommodation at the Grand Hotel. In the afternoon we had a tour of the wineries, and that evening they transported us to Coomealla Club across the New South Wales border for a fellowship smorgasbord.

Saturday was taken up exploring the town followed by a leisurely trip down the River Murray in the Paddle Steamer "Avoca", followed by our dinner meeting with the local Rotarians. Sunday morning saw us touring the town and district in this prosperous fruit growing area, followed by barbeque luncheon before departing our various ways for home.

## ***PERTH & ESPERENCE (WA) FLY-IN***

### **January / February 1987**

The main purpose of the fly-in was to witness the America's Cup race. This was our first trip to the west and it certainly was an excellent occasion very ably planned by our super organiser Alan (Sam) Oliver. 91 friends in 23 aircraft enjoyed this adventure. Because of the distance it was decided to make the trip in stages. We initially met at Ceduna where we refuelled and stayed for the night, and partook of a sumptuous dinner. We then took off for Forrest for fuel before heading to Kalgoorlie, where we met at the airport and made comfortable in our motel. The evening was organised by the Kalgoorlie and Boulder Rotary Clubs and being a Sunday it was a barbeque plus fellowship. The event took place in the Flying Doctor hanger. Next morning we made a tour of the town which included looking at the various mines and the huge open cut mine before we alighted at the airport for our flight to Jandakot. We settled down in the suburb of Mundaring, which was the home of Sam Oliver. Next day we toured the city of Perth and then had three days free to watch the Americas Cup, which was being held down at Fremantle. Saturday saw us picnicking in Kings Park. On Monday we flew to Manjimup and toured the area and then explored the forest of the giant Jarrah and Karri trees, followed by a dinner meeting with the Manjimup Rotarians. On Tuesday we flew to Albany where we were given lunch by the Albany Rotary Club before moving on to Esperence. Here we mixed with a couple of Macchi Airforce trainers who were visiting to arrange an Air

Pageant in Esperence. The Airforce personnel attended the dinner meeting, which was organised by the Esperence and Esperence Bay Clubs. It was a mighty evening with excellent guest speakers. Next day we were taken to a distant beach for a picnic with some of their members. It was a drive along some of the nicest clean beaches that you would ever see. The beach was many kilometres long and consisted of pristine sand facing direct to the South Pole. With a large number attending and the distance involved there were many combinations of itineraries. As we were away two weeks and covered so much ground there would have hardly been any two itineraries the same, this made it such an agreeable trip.

### ***TAREE (NSW) FLY-IN***

#### **April 1987**

The Northern New South Wales Coast fly-in was ably organised by Clive Woolcott and his crew, which catered for 17 aircraft and 72 crew. Rotary North assisted the Manning River Aero Club to provide our evening meal in the hanger. Next morning we toured the river, beaches lagoon and recreation area before visiting an oyster farm to see how it is done, and participated in some of the delicacy straight from the sea. We bussed it out to Wingham for a barbeque lunch in the famous Wingham Brush hosted by the Wingham Rotary Club. Then it was a visit to the Historical museum and the Tannery. Then we proceeded to make our way back to Taree where we met at Manuel's Restaurant for a seafood night, hosted by the Taree and Taree North Rotary Clubs. Sunday saw us hosted in Clive and Mollie Woolcott's home for our meeting before setting sail for home again.

### ***COROWA FLY-IN***

#### **23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> October 1987**

26 aircraft and 100 persons attended (44 members and 56 visitors). President of Corowa Rotary Club, John Affleck, and his fellow members, did a magnificent job in organising an interesting program for the weekend.

## **AROUND AUSTRALIA FLY-AWAY**

### **April 1988**

The round Australia Bi-Centennial flight was a great success, with the response of Rotary members and clubs in the areas visited beyond expectation. The media coverage must rate as some of the best that Rotary has ever achieved in this country. Press, radio, and television did a tremendous job in reporting the various events, such as the trip, polio Plus, Bi-centennial celebrations, and Rotary's place in the community. Four members from USA participated, being John Linford, Kirke Everson, Don Bymaster, and Bob Wilmeth.

It was Sam Oliver's vision, planning, and effort that made the tour a success. Andy Patten and our Canberra members provided a great start with the Canberra fly-in, 99 attended, 2 from USA. There were 9 members attending their first fly-in. David Riley and Bill Cromarty promoted Polio Plus, Brian Chapman organised the flight plans, and Sally and Barry Townsend kept the records and statistics. The co-operation of all the participants made the flight trouble free and there were only a few incidental mechanical problems which created only minor hold ups. We were looked after extremely well along the way for which we are most grateful. The Department of Aviation was very co-operative and, with a few minor exceptions, showed patience and gave much assistance. One highlight was the combined meeting in Perth with Mundaring, Maddington, and Scarborough clubs, at which we had about 200 present, including three District Governors.

The conclusion to the flight was ably planned by Viv Elliott, and the Mildura finale was a fitting end to a rare lifetime opportunity. There were 12 to 18 aircraft continually together with 11 doing the full trip. Some 22 aircraft took part in some section of the trip.

Surplus funds amounting to \$2,000, was donated to Polio plus.

1988 BICENTENNIAL IFFR Flight around Australia  
*from Pam van der Reest. [Oliver] diary.*

Sam and I were returning to Western Australia from an IFFR fly-in in 1985, and while we were somewhere between the Great Australian Bight and the railway line I asked him if the IFFR had anything in mind for the Bicentenary. He became very quiet and I just presumed he was thinking about it. Closer to home I suggested a flight around Australia. Sam didn't say anything, which wasn't unusual for Sam but the wheels must have been turning somewhere, because twelve months later he put the suggestion to an IFFR meeting. The suggestion was met with damp enthusiasm. Some members thought it a great idea, but who would be willing to take it on. In 1987 he put the same suggestion forward again. 34

By this time the event was closing in, and although everyone thought it a great idea, there were still no volunteers to organise it.

I knew Sam was keen for the event to go ahead so I promised to help him organise it, so he put his hand up. Offers of assistance came forward after that and as the time for Bicentennial celebration closed in, a network of willing Rotarians and IFFR members were linked together in a great cause.

Living in Western Australia, a long way from most of the fly-ins, we would need all the help we could get, but nowhere did anyone decline to help.

The proposal was to land at airfields that had an IFFR member in the local Rotary Club. It would be a three way challenge. Firstly, to meet as many Rotarians and Rotary Clubs as possible, secondly to help raise funds for the Rotary Polio Plus programme, and thirdly to have a great holiday.

Once Sam got started, nothing stood in his way. Things that seemed too hard were somehow conquered and Sam soon had a workable plan and a good team of willing members to help him from all parts of Australia. It was quite a challenge because he was often dealing with people he had never met, in places he had never been to before, some of which he had never heard of before.

The idea was that members could fly as much of, or as little of, the proposed flight as they wished. Eleven aircraft participated. Most flew the whole distance and a couple only went as far as Darwin.

The challenge began in Canberra. Most members arrived a few days early prior to the Anzac Day commencement. We were fortunate to enjoy a tour of the new Parliament house, which was scheduled to be officially opened by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in June 1988. We also visited the National War Memorial, The Art Gallery and The High Court. Some of us even found time to take a bicycle ride around Lake Burly Griffin.

After attending the Anzac Day dawn service in Canberra we took off in an anti clockwise direction around Australia. Dressed in bright yellow tee shirts, (some even had matching trousers) you couldn't miss us in a thick fog. I think there are probably a few of those tee shirts hidden in a cupboard somewhere in Australia today.

Our first stop was at Cobar for refuel and a lunch stop supplied by the Cobar Rotary Club. Here we encountered our first fund raising experience, a craft stall. All funds created by our visit were retained by the local Rotary Club, and put toward their Polio Plus donation.

Our second stop was at Walgett. Walgett had experienced heavy rains for many days prior to our visit. The water level had reached the top of the levee bank but hadn't gone over. However, some of the roads in surrounding areas were closed due to flooding. Our transportation to our accommodation in a motel outside of town was by school bus. Fortunately the bus driver knew his way around and was able to get us to the motel via some gravel tracks. Even so, at one rather wet spot, we had to get off the bus and walk behind it while the driver eased the bus to firmer ground. But the staff from the motel had the night off because the main road was flooded and it would have been dangerous for them to return home after the event, so the proprietor, and his wife, were cooks, bar staff and receptionists that night. They tossed the room keys on the counter and invited us to help ourselves in shared accommodation. You sure found out who among your friends snored that night.

We were left to amuse ourselves that evening, but that was okay because we had two American couples with us on this trip. John Linford was World President of IFFR that year and he and a friend Kirke Emerson and wives had come to Australia especially to join in on this special event. Kirke had been an Ace pilot during WWII with many kills to his name. He entertained us with tales of his war time experiences and had a wonderful story telling way with him. We were all enthralled.

It didn't rain that night and so the ground was a little firmer for the bus trip back to the airfield the next morning. Flight plans completed, the slowest aircraft, a Cessna 172 flown by Les Grayling, with folding bicycle on board, was the first to take off but not always the first to land. We were met at Roma by a local Rotarian and herded into the Aero Club rooms for lunch. It was standing room only in the tiny building, but we had a lovely lunch and the Rotary Club seized the opportunity to extract funds from us in a game of heads and tails for Polio Plus. We enjoyed only a brief stop at Roma and flew on to Rockhampton.

On arrival at Rockhampton we were met by the local Rotary Club with media in tow. There we were transported to town in a black and white striped double decker bus emblazoned with giant letters advertising the local radio station, and taken to the town hall for a civic reception. The next morning the local paper had our group photograph across its front page, all wearing our yellow tee shirts.

That evening we were hosted to a pool side Barbecue at the home of one of the Rotary members. Now Sam had carried the weight of responsibility very well so far. There had been no glitches and no hold ups from the weather so he was very happy. This gave Sam a good feeling and he was able to relax at this friendly gathering around the swimming pool.

However, it really wasn't intended that anyone should actually swim in the pool. It was just a lovely setting for a barbecue. But Sam wasn't watching his footing and the pool steps seemed to be unnoticed until Sam slipped gracefully from one step to another until he was waist deep in the water. The very kind hostess lent Sam a pair of her husbands trousers, which were two sized too big, while she tossed Sam's clothes in the drier. Guess who got fined that night at the Rotary Club dinner?

The next day we were taken for a tour of the local crocodile farm. For many of us it was the first time we had seen these prehistoric creatures but on this trip, it wouldn't be the last time. After lunch we went back on the striped bus to the airport and received television coverage of our departure. Our adventure was news worthy to the local station.

From Rockhampton we flew to Mackay for a brief tour of the town and lunch with the Rotary Club. Some of the places we visit only permitted a short stop. All agreed they would have liked to have stayed longer in Mackay as the Rotary Club members were so friendly, but we had a schedule to keep to. We wanted to be in Cairns before the weather changed as there was a front approaching.

On arrival at Cairns all aircraft were requested to change radio channels on landing to obtain taxi instructions. One pilot, whose name escapes me now, forgot to comply and was urgently told to expedite the runway immediately. However the call came too late and a Jumbo Jet had to make a go round. It was a spectacular sight at close hand, although it cost the airline many extra dollars for extra fuel and scored the IFFR pilot a 225. He became another victim for a fine session at the next Rotary meeting.

The adventure was organised so that we had a three day holiday stay in a few places around Australia and Cairns was the first of these vacation stops. It would also allow us to make up time if the weather misbehaved itself and we were grounded somewhere. But it is interesting to note that we didn't lose any days due to inclement weather at all.

With three days of holiday in Cairns we were able to take in the local sights. The Kuranda train was the most popular attraction and in those days. There was no Sky Rail so the only way back to town was the same as you went up the mountain. Some of us took a cruise up the coast to the cape and a coach trip to Port Douglas was also on the Rotary Club's itinerary. We enjoyed a nightly seafood buffet at the resort we stayed at which left some of us with a desire to visit Cairns again, one day.

We had dodged the showers while in Cairns and the sky cleared for our next flight to Mt Isa via Cloncurry. At Cloncurry we were supposed to have been met by a member of the Rotary Club and this is

where Sam's first concerns showed, as the airfield seemed to be completely deserted on our arrival. All aircraft were safely on the ground, refuelled and tied down. We waited and waited. We took photos of the original Qantas hangar and waited some more. Then along came two police officers in a police car. Sam went to chat to them, telling them who we were and why we were here. Fortunately the police man knew the chap Sam was waiting for and knew where to find him. So Sam was taken to town to the town oval where a Rodeo was in full swing. Sam found the Rotarian who was busy making hot dogs and hamburgers. Sam introduced himself and then the penny dropped! And so did the guy's face. He said he knew he had something else on this day but couldn't remember what it was.

The situation was soon rectified. The Rotarian had civic influence and soon commandeered the community bus and we were shuttled into town for a visit to the Rodeo. It was an unscheduled stop but a nice surprise.

It was while we were waiting for the bus to shuttle us back to the airfield that a few of us enjoyed an impromptu interlude from two little boys. The boys, about five or six years old, dressed in check shirts, jeans, cowboy boots and very large hats were heading to the toilets. Once inside they were chattering within earshot of our group, about the Rodeo. Suddenly the voice on the PA system got very excited. The two little boys emerged with jeans etc around their ankles. They cocked a hand around each ear and listened intently until the excitement died down, then returned to the toilet to continue their business. There are a few photo albums around the country now with wonderful memories of that special IFFR adventure and I guess most of them have those two dear little boys on record, along with the Cloncurry Rodeo.

Our visit to Mt Isa was only for one night. But some of us managed to squeeze in a visit to the mine, while others wandered into town and found the Rotary mine museum. This endeavour by the Rotary Club was built into the side of a hill. It was created by Rotary members and manned by members on a volunteer basis (mostly Rotariannes). It was a means of fund raising. And by all means quite a successful enterprise.

In the evening we shared another Rotary Barbecue with raffle and fine session. David Riley was our fine master on this trip and for those of us who have shared one of David's fine sessions, he makes them most entertaining.

We left the red earth of Mt Isa the next morning and headed for Tennant Creek. Our timing wasn't the best on this occasion as most of the Rotary members were away at district conference. These things happen

but we didn't miss out. Thanks to the Rotariannes and a couple of guys who didn't go to conference, we enjoyed boxed lunches at the airfield and were able to top up the fuel tanks in our aircraft .

It was here that some of us had our first encounter with little green frogs. They may be very harmless but a few of us found their presence in the toilet bowls quite intruding. We felt like executioners when we flushed the loo, but somehow the frogs returned in time to scare the daylight out of the next victim.

We still had plenty of daylight to make the next stop at Katherine. However, we stopped off briefly at the Air Base at Tindall on the way and were given a brief tour of the new living quarters and social facilities of the RAAF. It was a modern facility with comfortable family accommodation and single persons quarters. They were well set up for social activities also.

Our accommodation was at Springvale Homestead. It was time to taste "out back" living. Beverley was a lovely lady and like the rest of us was enjoying the tour immensely. However, her lifestyle in the US of A allowed her to visit a hairdresser three times a week, and she had not had that luxury on this trip. And by this time she was getting a little desperate. She was also a little concerned to find our accommodation was in single room huts with minimum space. The bathroom was not more than an over grown cupboard .

Beverley's greatest concern arose when we were taken for a boat ride along a peaceful river and it was suggested that we take our bathers. The day was hot and a swim sounded like a great idea. However, earlier in the day we had been on a river cruise to see the local wildlife and watch as they fed the crocodiles. It was fascinating to watch these creatures rise up out of the water to grab a chicken off a stick. They could reach up as far as the safety rails on the boat.

When it came time for our swim we were accompanied by an Aboriginal guide, who was a fascinating man to talk to. He had completed four and a half years of a five year course in Law at Monash University. But he decided it was more important for him to become an elder of his tribe than to study white man's law. He had undergone the first stages of initiation. This left him with a welt on his upper arm, caused when hot ash was rubbed into a deep cut. He was looking forward to future initiation rites which would leave him with larger welts across his upper chest and abdomen. When this was completed, and he had learnt from the elders of the tribe about the beliefs of his ancestors, he would become an elder and could pass on his teachings to other young men of the tribe.

We were drifting along the river in peaceful bliss, taking in the scenery when we reached the spot for our swim. There on the sandy bank, sunning itself was a rather large crocodile. Of course we were all concerned. Then our guide told us it was only a fresh water croc and they weren't man eaters. In fact, it took off as soon as we beached the boat. For those of us who were eager for a swim, we believed him. But not Beverley. She refused to get out of the boat. She returned to the landing with the guide who went back to get the second half of our party and did not return, leaving us to enjoy a swim in the murky water. In fact, it felt great, but you couldn't see the bottom on the river. If you looked down through the water, you couldn't see your hips. But it was a memorable moment that many of would never forget. But have you ever seen a large group of people trying to swim in a huddle. No one wanting to be on the outside of the bunch.

After our stay in Katherine we flew to Darwin, stopping off at Cooinda for a cruise on the yellow waters. This was a photographer's paradise. Giant water lilies, crocs, Jesus birds who walked on the lily pads etc. all added to the attractions of this world famous tourist attraction.

We only stayed in Darwin for one day but managed to fit in local attractions and a Rotary barbacue with fine session and raffles.

Now it was time to take stock of minor casualties. One fellow had hired an aircraft in the far south east and had considerable engine problems with it. He had it investigated and had to stay in Darwin while it underwent major maintenance. He caught up with us again in Carnarvon. Annoying radio problems, an oleo oil leak but nothing more serious. Except the fellow who misjudged the edge of a swimming pool. He was okay once they gave him twelve stitches in his head.

Soon we were in Western Australia. Our first stop was at Kununurra. The weather was hot and sticky, so the motel swimming pool was our first goal. Some of us received phone calls from families as it was Mother's Day. No one wanted to leave the pool so we had an impromptu meeting in the pool.

We were treated to a tour of the township and lookout before being taken on another river cruise of Lake Argyle, with a stop off at the turn around point, a visit to the gift shop, and ice creams all round.

The shop owners had a selection of zebra rock and some pretty caged birds. Among them was a crow who had been taught to talk. He said hello and told you his name. The words were quite clear but he spoke in slow motion, just like they do when they caw.

We also visited a diamond shop in Kununurra where they had the

rare (at that time) pink diamonds.

Our next scheduled three day holiday stop was at Broome. Leaving Kununurra we detoured over the Bungle Bungles, Wolf Creek crater and down along the Prince Regent River, famous for its waterfalls, cliffs and gorges and fast flowing tides. Spectacular!

In Broome we were privileged to attend the inauguration of the new Broome Rotary Club, with the usual fine session and raffle for Polio Plus. Broome gave us the chance to catch up with the inevitable washing etc. We stayed at a small motel owned by one of the Rotary members and set aside exclusively for our group. By now we knew each other well and it was just like a huge family gathering. A visit to Broome wouldn't be the same without a stroll along Cable Beach and a visit to the Japanese Cemetery. Some of us hired Mini Mokes and drove out to Gargantuan Rocks to see the giant Dinosaur footprints in the rocks.

Fully revived after a wonderful break in Broome, we flew on to Port Hedland, where we enjoyed lunch with the Rotary Club with more fines before being taken on a tour of Mt Newman Mining.

Then it was off to Karratha for more tours etc. This time with Hammersley Iron, Dampier Salt and the Burrup Pininsular Gas project. While most went on the tours with Paul Harris Fellow and personal friend Ben Sharpe, three of us, Steve Jackson, Brian Condon and myself went to the local radio station for an on air interview.

We were asked to be at the station at 9.28 am which gave us just long enough to tell the interviewer who we were and in which order we would be interviewed before the 9.30 interview. The rest of the crews were being taken around in one of Hammersley's extra long busses and could listen to our broadcast. We all had lunch at Hammersley's staff canteen. Later that evening we shared a Rotary meeting with the Karratha Rotary Club, in grand style, with another fine session.

Now we were well down the West Australian coast heading for Carnarvon. During this flight, just after we had flown over the salt pans near the coast, we were alarmed to hear a "May Day" call. For those of us who had been enjoying the scenery in a very relaxed mode, it brought all senses back to life immediately. But how's this for luck. The fellow who made the call looked out of the window and there just happened to be a station airstrip below him. The terrain was rough but the airstrip looked okay.

He landed safely but once on the ground lost radio contact with everyone. Brian Condon being the caring person that he is, decided to follow the aircraft down, but Brian had seen another airstrip closer to the

homestead and decided he had better chance of talking to DOT (Department of Transport) via a ground phone as air reception wasn't good from the aircraft. Unfortunately, just as Brian was about to touch down, he realised the airstrip had been ploughed. Fortunately he landed safely without incident.

The May Day pilot had rectified his problem by switching the fuel cock from the empty tank to the full one and taken off again to continue his flight to Carnarvon. But Brian now had his own problems.

The DOT declared the ploughed airstrip unserviceable and would not give Brian permission to take off. After long conflicting conversation, Brian took full responsibility, as pilot in command, and took off. He later said the take off was a bit rough, but he and his crew all made it safely to join us at Carnarvon for lunch, supplied by the Rotary club. The pilot with engine troubles at Darwin also caught up with us here. The fine sessions from these incidents would wait until the Rotary meeting at Geraldton.

That night we stayed in Geraldton and were fortunate to share a special dinner with the Rotary Club.

Students from the Geraldton High School Aeronautical course had completed their course and this was their presentation night. The dux of the course was a young female student. Her prize was a flight to Melbourne in a Jumbo Jet and a tour of the Qantas maintenance hangars. She was thrilled.

There were stories to tell, humour to share along with the usual fine session that night. The next day we flew on to Perth.

Our three day stopover in Perth was a busy time. Sam's Rotary Club at Mundaring hosted a meeting. IFFR members were billeted with home hosts and friendships made during the Americas Cup challenge at Fremantle were re kindled.

We were hosted at a reception at the South of Perth Yacht Club where Sally Townsend, affectionately named "The Knitting Navigator" read some of the poetry she had written during the adventure. Members also enjoyed a tour of the Perth airport control tower, and shown through the ATC centre that monitored radio conversations from Mauritius to the Pacific ocean areas. Most found this really interesting and gave them a higher respect for the voices of ATC.

Time was closing in on this adventure, with only four more stops ahead. The weather had been kind to us all around Australia so far.

We flew to Esperance on the South coast of Western Australia where we had a combined meeting with three Rotary Clubs. This turned out to be an education in fund raising. There was an auctioneer among the

members who took charge of the meeting with all the banter of a cattle auction. Among the items up for auction was an 8kg crayfish, a brass lamp and various bottles of wine. These were quickly sold but the fellow wasn't ready to stop there. He auctioned off the floral table decorations. The evening was a lot of fun and the Polio Plus programme realised \$1500.

Our journey continued the next day and for some it was the first time they had flown along the Great Australian Bight. The cliffs are a spectacular sight in clear weather and we were lucky to be able to enjoy the sight. We spent the night at Ceduna in South Australia and had covered all States except Victoria so far.

Ceduna had no Rotary Club but was an important refuelling stop so had to be included in the flight plan. Here we held a post mortem on the flight. Everyone was asked how we could have improved the adventure for future challenges. All agreed there was nothing that could have been improved.

At Port Pirie we were given another civic reception and enjoyed dinner that night with the Rotary members.

The final leg of the flight took us over the Flinders Range to Mildura where our member Viv Elliot looked after us well. Three Rotary Clubs collectively hosted us at Mildura. The evening dinner was a wonderful time for story telling and I was privileged to be invited to be guest speaker. We had a captive audience to share our experiences and laughs. Then it was time to unwind on a relaxing cruise on houseboats along the mighty Murray River for a picnic lunch.

Our final farewell was a barbecue hosted by the Mildura Aero Club at the airport. Then it was time to say goodbye to everyone. Previous acquaintances became good friends and a few tears were shed as we farewelled each aircraft.

Sam and I had flown across the Nullarbor to join this wonderful adventure, but the weather had been kind too long and we were delayed from departure from Mildura for an extra day before making that mighty flight home again. This time we had wonderful memories to take home and some great photographs. Digital cameras weren't around then but we had lots of postcards and pictures to keep.

The IFFR Bicentennial Flight around Australia had met all its challenges. Statistically we contacted 30 Rotary Clubs, participated in 17 Rotary meetings, paid up at 12 fine sessions and many raffles. Eleven aircraft had participated flying 11,000kms over a period of 27 days. And the final Australian figure for fund raising for the Polio Plus programme exceeded all expectations, even though our contribution toward it was a mere drop in the ocean.

## ***RICHMOND (NSW) AIR SHOW***

### **October 1988**

This was excellent and all who went spoke highly of the quality of the air show. We had 12 aircraft and 54 persons present. The Rotary breakfast was attended by over 200 local Rotarians, IFFR members and visitors. Alan Grady, Max Fleming, and Barry Thompson put a lot of effort into the show, and must be pleased with the result.

After the air show, many of the members proceeded on a fly-away to Bundaberg.

## ***BUNDERBERG (Qld) FLY-IN***

### **21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1988**

Ted Plumber, President Bill Douglass, and the members of the Bunderberg Rotary Club did a great job in organising an interesting weekend. Activities included a tour of the distillery, a trip to the reef, and dinner at the Bert Hinkler museum. Thanks were also extended to the local Aero Club for providing the excellent barbeque at the airport, on the night of our arrival. There were 82 in attendance, including 34 members (4 first time), arriving in 25 aircraft. IFFR Australia membership stands at 190.

## ***DUBBO (NSW) FLY-IN***

### **14<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> April 1989**

Warren Oliver from Cobar, and John Barwick from Tamworth, assisted Brian Harvey of Dubbo Rotary Club to make the necessary arrangements. Attendance numbered 19 (39 members and 40 visitors), arriving in 27 aircraft. The members were attending their first fly-in.

On Friday, visitors made their own way to their motel, next to the Golf Club. The evening fellowship buffet meal was at the motel for visitors and Dubbo Rotarians.

Saturday's program included a bus tour of the city, terminating at a BBQ lunch in Western Plains Zoo, catered for by Dubbo South Rotary Club. A combined Rotary meeting at night was held at the West Dubbo Bowling Club with both the Dubbo Rotary clubs assisting with the catering.

After the IFFR meeting on Sunday morning, all the visitors and local Rotarians assembled at the Lion's Park for a BBQ lunch before departure home. Australian membership now numbers 194.

### ***STAWELL FLY-IN***

#### **29<sup>th</sup> September to 1<sup>st</sup> October 1989**

Attendance numbered 103 (45 members and 58 guests), arriving in 24 aircraft and 11 cars. There were 4 members attending their first fly-in. Lindsay Brown advised any Rotarians who wished to stay for several days would receive co-operation and assistance from local Rotarians for local transport, tourism and entertainment.

Activities included a visit to the Grampian Mountain range, a wild flower exhibition, a tour of the Western Mining Company gold mine and workings, and a barbeque at the Seppelts' Great Western Cellars

The meeting on Sunday expressed grateful appreciation to Lindsay and Marjory Brown, and Norman and Lois Cottman for the excellent organising of the weekend. Thanks also go the Mayor Isabel Humphries and councillors for the Mayoral Reception, Stawell Rotary Club, the bus drivers, Western Mining Company, and Seppelts winery. Membership has grown to 210.

A first class weekend of fellowship.

### ***PORT LINCOLN (SA) FLY-IN***

#### **27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> April 1990**

104 persons attended; 44 members and 60 guests. They arrived in 32 aircraft and 2 cars, and were accommodated at Kingscourt Motel on the foreshore.

The Saturday program included a tour of the town, marina, and some of the fine homes of the area , culminating in a trip to Coffin Bay, noted for its crayfish and oysters. On Saturday evening there was a combined Rotary meeting with the Port Lincoln club; a fun loving group to say the least.

At the Sunday meeting, it was agreed to hold a reserve fund, to cover a fly-in cancellation due to weather. Membership has grown to 228.

Port Lincoln is renowned for its fishing, and some members extended their stay to take advantage of fishing safaris.

### ***BROOME (WA) FLY-AWAY***

#### **25<sup>th</sup> June to 9<sup>th</sup> July 1990**

Sam Oliver notified that 27 aircraft and 110 persons (including 5

people flying commercial) had booked for the Alice Springs section of the fly-away, and a total of 122 people for the Broome section. Fellowship dinners were held at Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, and Broome.

At Alice Springs, on Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup>, we visited the historic Bond Springs cattle station, followed with a “Bushman’s” lunch. Then Wednesday was a full day tour of the MacDonnell ranges, including scenic helicopter rides at Glen Helen Lodge. Thursday was a free day to tour the numerous attractions in The Alice, including the historic Telegraph Station, and a brief flight to Ayers Rock. Then on Thursday night, we were bussed to the Chateau Hornsby winery for a combined Rotary/fellowship dinner, with the Rotary club of Alice Springs-Mbantua. At the conclusion, Ted Egan providing a two hour entertainment show.

At Tennant Creek, on Friday 29<sup>th</sup>, the fellowship dinner was held at the Eldorado Restaurant, in conjunction with the local Rotary Club’s change over. Our members outnumbered the club members 4 to 1, but the fellowship was as good as it gets. Although the club only has a membership of 11, they are a 400% Polio Plus club, and at a fund-raising project, they raised \$10,000 in one evening, for a four wheel ambulance. The District Governor travelled from Cairns to attend the change-over, and IFFR provided the guest speakers.

The flight from Tennant Creek to Broome was rather boring across the desert. After a 3-1/2 hour flight to Halls Creek and a refuel break, we had another 2-1/2 hour flight over Fitzroy Crossing to Broome, a tourist centre based on the pearling industry, with 7,000 population. On Monday evening, we joined the local Rotary club, membership 18, at their meeting at the Roebuck Bay Resort. The rest of the week involved relaxing on the magnificent Cable Beach, hiring Mini Mokes to tour the area, flying over the many islands North of Broome, visiting the museums, admiring the pearls (and cringing at the price), or just relaxing and soaking up the tropical atmosphere. At one fellowship evening, Bruce and Jan Watson were spirited away while arrangements were finalised to celebrate their wedding anniversary. David Riley was suitably attired as “Father O’Riley” while the rest of the members assembled as the wedding guests to “re-marry” the happy couple.

On Friday we headed down the coast to Karratha to participate in a program organised by the local Rotary Club. On the way, we passed over a 2 Km long ore train, heading for Port Hedland. We were housed in the Hamersley iron worker’s motel, with meals in the common mess hall. On Saturday we were bussed around the mining facilities, including the iron ore shipping terminal, and the Liquid Natural Gas processing plant. On Sunday, another bus tour of the surrounding Karatha/Roebourne,

including the water supply, and the unusual coloured rock. In the evening we joined the Rotary club in a fellowship dinner. They have 4 members, very enthusiastic, and high on fellowship.

On Monday it was time to head home, in many different directions, after a most enjoyable and enlightening fly-around. Everyone expressed their appreciation to Sam Oliver for the huge effort he put into the organisation of the tour.

### ***COFFS HARBOUR (NSW) FLY-IN***

**12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> October 1990**

Ray Wells did a first class job in co-ordinating the fly-in. Unfortunately the weekend was marred by an aviation accident, with four of our mates and friends losing their lives. Lindsay and Marjory Brown, and Norman and Lois Cottman were killed when their aircraft crashed 38nm south of Coffs Harbour. Remember the great fly-in at Stawell that they organised?

There were 52 members and 79 guests (total 131) in attendance, arriving in 33 aircraft and 10 cars. There were 4 first time members.

On Saturday, we were bussed into the mountains, stopping first at Bellingen to inspect a store, which has been preserved, both in structure and content, in the style of the early 1900s. Then onto Dorrigo at the top of the escarpment, where we were shown over a relatively new school, with many design features suggested by the students.

Membership had now reached 234.

### ***MOUNT BUFFALO (Vic) FLY-IN***

**April 1991**

Quite an incredible fly-in, organised by Bill and ..... Crommety, Dusty and ...Lane, David and Elaine Mann, and Ian and Roma Richards. 130 members and guests in 15 aircraft and numerous cars, flew into Wangaratta airport on Friday. After a visit to the Air Museum, we were bussed to the historic township of Beechworth, where most buildings have been retained in the same character as the late 1800s. Then on through Bright to Mount Buffalo chalet. The chalet is a popular place during the snow season, but is generally has low occupancy this time of the year.

On Saturday, we strolled around the nearby lake and, getting close and personal to the wildlife, including Lyre birds. Then onto an elaborate lunch, complete with lace table cloth, a hang glider demonstration, and a

cricket match. Late in the afternoon we visited the actual Mount Buffalo mountain to view the sunset.

On Saturday evening, after dinner, the local Rotary club organised a concert of songs, skits, and dance performances.

On the return bus trip, we passed through Myrtleford with its Autumn colours.

## ***DARWIN (NT) FLY-IN***

### **August 1991**

On Thursday 1<sup>st</sup>, we assembled at Katherine at the start of the Darwin fly-away. In the evening, we held a fellowship dinner with the Rotary Club of Katherine

On the Katherine to Darwin section, participants were encouraged make a side trip to Jim Jim Falls, Cooinda, or Jabiru. After booking in to the Mirrabeeena Resort, a BBQ get together was held, poolside.

On Monday 6<sup>th</sup>, we travelled to Batchelor then to Widman River, then Cooinda and yellow waters.

On Saturday night, 10<sup>th</sup>, we had a fellowship dinner, with the Darwin Rotary clubs, at the Casuarina Swimming centre

Laurie Chapman and his crew, flew to Cooinda to tour the Yellow Waters, staying overnight at the Four Seasons motel. Next morning, when carrying out the daily check, we realised the fuel had been milked, leaving only enough to get to Jabiru; a good reason for lockable fuel caps.

## ***RENMARK-BERRI (SA) FLY-IN***

### **6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> September 1991**

There were 85 of us at Berri for the weekend, well organised by Ron and Jan Grosser. We were accommodated at the Berri Hotel/Motel which is in a beautiful location. Just across the road was the broad Murray River with a generous strip of grass and trees on the bank. It was a favourite spot for the early runners and walkers and to gather before our outings. Just a little upstream were the Lyrup ferries; two of them worked hard all day with all sorts of vehicles crossing over.

Our first engagement on Friday night was a Mayoral Reception where we were well entertained, while listening to the lady Mayor talking with pride of her city; a pride well justified. The venue was ideal to renew old friendships and meet new members.

The coaches picked us up on Saturday and we set off for Cobdogla, where some unusual pumps were installed in the early days of the irrigation settlement. It was an impressive piece of engineering which required very fine tuning by engineers to get it working. Although the pump duties have been replaced by electric units, the old plant can be still run, but there are only three old men left who have the knack to get them operating. Very briefly the pumps are enormous “U” tubes which partially fill with water

from the river. Gas is admitted above the water and the tube closed. A spark fires the gas, blowing the water out the open end of the “U” tube into the irrigation channel many feet above the river. The trick is to tune the system so that the cycle is continuous. Also at the site there was an operating miniature railway and an enormous traction engine. Some of our intrepid people climbed up on the traction engine, but most were satisfied with a ride on the railway, although there were doubts whether the wheels were round.

We then went on to the little town of Monash, which is noted for its large playground. Built by a local mechanic, the clever way in which old pieces of steel and machinery have been welded together to form the many rides, slides and objects of interest, make an exhibit with a great attraction. Coaches are constantly calling with sightseers, and there is no entry charge. The ladies showed their courage by taking a particularly fast flying fox, which, if your feet weren’t already running at the other end, deposited you with a belly basher and a mouth full of sand. Bill Smart found that some of his friends were doubtful of the cause of his groggy disposition, after he was spun at high speed on a turntable.

Liba Liba Houseboats were used to convey half of us from the Renmark Warf to the BBQ where the Renmark Rotary Club provided an excellent lunch and the visitors stocked up with local produce of oranges and wine. The other half then went back in the houseboats to Renmark and the coaches made a tour of Renmark including the Jane Eliza project. This ambitious scheme of marina housing will be special in the future, for a country city that is struggling due to the recession.

Next was an inspection of the Berri Co-Op, one of Australia’s largest wineries; an enormous project that is currently expanding. The tasting room was in action for us to enjoy the large variety of wines.

The Rotary Clubs of the Riverland combined to give us a Rotary meeting on Saturday night and Graham, a pilot from the Royal Flying Doctor Service was a most interesting speaker.

On Sunday, after the IFFR meeting, we assembled at a stretch of the river called Martin’s Bend where we had another fine meal, this time provided by the Berri Rotary Club. From here, some departed for home, while those staying another night were invited to the Grosser’s block. They expected 8 but around 30 turned up. All in all, a very enjoyable weekend, and many thanks to Ron and Jan for the thought and work put into the organisation.

***MORNINGTON PENINSULA (Vic) FLY-IN***  
**13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> March 1992**

Bruce and Heather Davis organised an interesting weekend, with aircraft destined to Tyabb, and accommodation at Tyabb Fly Inn.

Early arrivals on Friday were able to visit Lysaght's hot and cold strip rolling mills. On Friday night we had a combined Rotary meeting with the Mornington and Mt. Martha Rotary clubs at the Mornington Racecourse .

On Saturday, a coach tour of the Mornington Peninsula visited a number of wineries, and viewing points of the area. An informal fellowship evening meal was enjoyed on the return trip back at our accommodation.

### **TASMANIA FLY-AROUND**

**16<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> March 1992**

This tour was designed to suit all tastes and to see some of the best parts of Tasmania. Those who were flying light aircraft, took off from Tyabb in the morning, and had a brief stop over at Flinders's Island for morning tea. Others flew commercial to Launceston. The tour was designed by Bruce and Heather Davis. There was some cloud when we left Tyabb, so the IFR rated pilots climbed through the cloud and had a comfortable trip above the cloud, at the same time keeping in touch with our VFR friends skimming the waves. Paul and Olive Cary in their Victor had marine type life jacket, which self inflated soon after take off. So the flew to Flinders in great discomfort.

The taxiways and hardstand areas at flinders island had been newly resurfaces, with plenty of loose gravel left over. The groundsman tried to force us to taxi over the loose gravel and most of us ignored him, but Ian Richards taxied over some of the bad area to the detriment of his propeller. It had to be removed in Hobart and sent back to Melbourne for dressing.

When we lodged our flight plans at Melbourne, we suggested that Hobart be notified of the arrival of a large number of private aircraft. This was not done, so with an extra RPT service and one flight controller on duty. Talk about confusion!

After all had landed, we were bussed to Port Arthur for an extensive tour. Next day the weather was unsuitable for flying, so the bus was engaged to traverse the island, first to some orchards close to Hobart. Then via Queenstown to Strahan, passing through picturesque parkland, and near hydro power stations.

Next day we toured the Strahan area, and took a ferry ride up the Gordon and Franklin rivers; a most pleasant trip through some beautiful forests.

The next stage of the tour took us to Cradle Mountain. Stow 51

Kentish flew in the day before, but the weather had closed in and it looked like he would be stuck there for a few days. We were able to walk around part of the lake, and view the exhibits in the museum.

From Cradle Mountain we proceeded to Devonport, then down through the centre of Tasmania, through the magnificent rural lands, back to Hobart, there united again with our aircraft.

As the weather had improved, we flew to St Helens on the North East coast, where the local Rotary club took us on a tour of the logging industry, which is strictly controlled by the Forestry Commission. Only material that is unsuitable for milling is used in the wood chip industry. Some areas are selective felled and other area clear felled, with a careful replanting program carried out using seed obtained from the same area.

That night we had a combined Rotary fellowship dinner, with local fresh lobster as the main course.

Next destination Launceston. Most flew direct, but a few took a scenic route via the South West corner. Launceston is a delightful city with plenty of historic building to visit, and the valley and river which was used as the water source for the original water wheels. Within easy reach there are museums of the mining industry and a Dutch village with interesting sculptures. Ray and Yvonne Tilley welcomed us to the city and showed us rays workshop under the house, where he built his first aircraft.

After a pleasant few days in Launceston, it was time to head home, most returning the same way that we came, via Flinders Island.

### *TOOWOOMBA (Qld) FLY-IN*

#### **9<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> October 1992**

Stow Kentish reported 33 aircraft and 118 persons attending the fly-in which followed immediately after the Carnival of Flowers, so the gardens were still at their best. There was a civic reception on Friday evening. A combine Rotary meeting, with the seven local Rotary clubs, was held on Saturday night. At the meeting on Sunday morning, there was a lively discussion on the subject of Incorporation in the USA, and the implications on us in Australia.

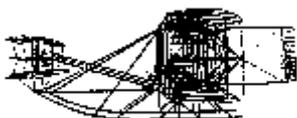
### *CAPE YORK-THURSDAY ISLAND (Qld) FLY-AWAY*

#### **12<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1992**

The fly-away followed on from the Toowoomba Fly-in and was organised by David Riley, Stow Kentish, Graham Mockridge, Bevan Fleming, and Bruce Watson. 17 aircraft participated, meeting at Cairns on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> October via Brampton Island and Dunk Island. Some crews

chose to track via Longreach and visit the Stockman's Hall of Fame. A combined Rotary meeting with Cairns Rotary Club was held on Thursday night. Lots of places to visit in Cairns, and after three nights in Cairns, departed for Cooktown and Horne Island. Some decided to stay at Horne Island, while others opted to go on to Thursday Island. Two nights spent on Thursday Island, then off to Weipa, Kurumba, and then return to home base. Much to see on the return trip home.

***COBDEN FLY-IN***  
**27<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> February 1993**



An open invitation was extended to participate in a fly-in and air show at Cobden. The weekend was a re-union of pilots and crew of the 1988 Air Pageant, and was organised by the Cobden Aero Club and the Rotary Club of Cobden, who offered limited billeting. Aircraft arrived on Saturday afternoon, with BBQ and refreshments available at the airstrip, and a mini bus running shuttles to the town. Fuel was supplied free of charge to participants. Joyflights were conducted on Sunday morning, with flying events on Sunday afternoon.

***LAKE KEEPIT (NSW) FLY-IN***  
**15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> October 1993**

As usual the weather for the Fly-in was marginal. Is October a bad month or are all these little aero-planes with mostly aging pilots an affront to the met experts? Despite their best efforts most got in the first day, some made it on the second, and only two stayed home.

John Barwick was right, Keepit is a delightful spot and the arrangements made the most of the area. There was nowhere to go other than walks, the lakeside and the gliding field and that was more than enough for most of us. The feature of the area was the huge red, white and blue marquee which was large enough to seat 180 people. Those who sat under the red panel had red faces, those under the blue panel were a bit pale and those under the white panel were near to normal. Not too much effort was expended. I noticed the Olivers and the Watts slashing at a tennis ball; I believe a few had a go at the catamaran and Ken Huxley and Lea Grayling tried the fishing. One fish was caught but Les's strict principles made him throw it back. Most of us were content to sit around, drink the coffee which was available continuously and catch up with friends. The gliders were a great attraction. John Wolfe and his friends in the Gliding Club made rides available for all that wanted one. For some it was a new experience and for others a welcome return to a previous skill. For those who learnt to fly in the distant past, Tiger Moth (DH82) VH-CYA was available and it was a joy to be in a "rudder" aircraft after 10 years. It seems that the years do not interfere with skills thought to be dormant.

Some Rotary Clubs seem to be able to latch on to a project which makes money, keeps up the interest of the members and provides fellowship. West Tamworth's catering expertise would be hard to beat. They have a special vehicle which when opened out provides many of the services needed for catering for a large function. Added to that they have a marquee which attaches and provides the food preparation and cooking area. Industrial type cookers and other equipment make it possible for the club to cater for very large numbers. The two chefs are not Rotarians but volunteers who give their time and talent for charity. The club provided all the meals, breakfast, lunch and dinner, all superbly cooked and served hot. Top wines and ales were available at reasonable prices.

A highlight of the weekend was the combined meeting with the West Tamworth Rotary Club. Alex McIntosh addressed the meeting on the

subject "Organ Donations". He showed us how valuable human organs can be in giving the gift of life to those would die or be deprived of a sense, such as sight, if donor organs were not available. It is an indication of how little most people know of the fact that there are so many people waiting for organs. Alex described how young Chad Knudson had told his parents that if ever anything happened to him he would want to be an organ donor. As a result when Chad was accidentally killed five young people are now leading normal lives with his gifts of kidneys, heart and corneas. This touching story gives Chad's father, Roy Knudson the opportunity to visit schools and pass on the message.

Rotary has helped in no small measure to get this program going. Flying Rotarian, Ken Huxley gave all present, an envelope with literature on the project and will be pleased to help any member who might like to put together a club project or a topic for a dinner meeting. Although organs from older people are welcome the emphasis is on schools.

It was certainly a relaxed weekend with plenty of opportunity to chat around with friends. I don't know what the weather was like to the south but Graham and I were in solid IFR shortly after leaving the ground and surrounded by thunderstorms.

John Barwick described how closely the fly-in came to being completely destroyed by weather. He had committed the fly-in to an expenditure of \$9500 by his Rotary Club and it was still pouring rain the night before. It was a harrowing time for him and Dorothy. The purpose of his remark was to bring home the importance to preserve the cash reserves from previous fly-ins, for such an eventuality. Fortunately, the weather cleared, there was a good attendance, and many of the suppliers reduced their charges so that about \$6000 was available to be given to the Dementia Care Unit at the Tamworth Base Hospital. With the Government subsidy of twice the donation, the total amount going to the hospital was \$18,000.

***MILDURA (Vic) FLY-IN***  
**20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> February 1994**

The Mildura “mini” Fly-In, organised by Vic Matotek and Viv Elliott, saw a happy reunion of local and visiting IFFR’s, attracting a total of 26 participants including 3 members who had not been to a fly-in before. Very pleasing it was to see the new faces of Peter and John Demeo from Wodonga, Len Marriott with friends John Southwell and Andrew McDonald from Camden, and Ken and Sandra Silva and family from St. Arnaud. Bondie brought his Exchange Student Stefan Reitz and the McClures came from Castlemaine. Brian had an important bowls game so he and Joyce came on Sunday. Les Grayling and Graham Mockridge also flew up from Geelong on Sunday.

The number attending was a good number for fellowship and transport with no need for coaches. We began with a catered lunch at the recently extended home of Garry and Anna Smart. Then followed a tour of the district calling at Woodsie’s Rock Shop and the A!lambie Winery where the Sydney boys bought up big. Our dinner was at the Sun River Resort where our visitors were staying.

On Sunday morning we flew out to Lake Mungo where we had an excellent lunch and out to the Walls of China in a small bus loaned by the owners. The Walls of China are sand hills which have been created by wind action.

***ROTTNEST ISLAND (WA) FLY-IN***  
**12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> March 1994**

The W.A. Section of the IFFR organised a combined Fly-In at Rottneest Island with the International Fellowship of Yachting Rotarians. Accommodation on Saturday night was on board the boats of members, and in return, joy/lights around the island were offered by our members.

***MAROOCHY (Qld) FLY-IN***  
**15<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> April 1994**

The approach to the Maroochy airport from the southwest is interesting and beautiful. Flying over the ridge and then between the ranges on either side of the Somerset Dam with the lush vegetation on the valley and slopes was an indication of what the Sunshine Coast was going to be like. Blessed with good weather, all who had booked turned up – 93 of us. I've never heard a tower controller working harder and more effectively. We were told to fly final after going on the other side of Mt. Coolum and then an orbit over the sea. I counted 3 takeoffs and 5 landings in 20 minutes and two of the landing aircraft were airlines. It was great to be greeted by old friends Ray and Nancy Wells who were running the shuttle service.

The Hyatt Coolum was a new experience for many IFR members. The concept of widely scattered villas which could only be reached by a long walk or by a shuttle which ran every 10 minutes was different. The villas were spacious and luxurious and very good value at the price negotiated by Ken Oliver.

It was not long before we discovered why everything was so green. It had been a very wet Autumn on the Sunshine Coast and Friday night was threatening again so we had dinner in one of the reception rooms at the Hyatt. This was a delightful meal with reunions taking place throughout the evening. This is the sort of function we all enjoy; little formality and plenty of opportunity to move around the room to greet friends. I spent several months at Nambour during the war and know a little of the area. I mentioned that there was a town called Diddillibah (pronounced Diddiddlybah), but no one believed me until the coach driver verified my statement next morning.

Our coach tour on Saturday took us through Maroochydore, Mooloolaba, Buderim, Caloundra, Landsborough, Maleny. One of the most interesting features of the weekend was our visit to the Skyfox factory at Caloundra Airport. The company representative, in the fewest words possible, described the current licensing standard for the light aircraft of the world. The Skyfox is one of the only three so licensed. We inspected the airframe construction, and the covering process using Stits fabric which is proofed against the sun's rays and then tightened. At least one of our members is very interested; Malcolm returned the next day to have a fly and found it to be a delight in the air. Derived from the Kitfox, the most popular kit aeroplane in the USA, the Skyfox differs in appearance with the pseudo radial cowl replaced by a conventional flat

topped cowl.

We stopped for lunch near the rainforest at Cairn Cross. Catering was by the Sunshine Coast Life Education Centre supporters which included Margaret Oliver. We all enjoyed the fresh cut sandwiches, cake and fresh fruit. A shopping stop was made at the arts and crafts shops in Montville where the coaches deposited us at the lower level then drove up to the top of the street making us climb the steep hill. However the pub was at the top so there was some incentive. We then came down through Mapleton, skirted the town of Nambour to go north to Yandina. The outside appearance of the pub at Mapleton has not changed, but I bet they don't have the keg on the counter covered by a wet bag any longer.

The Ginger Factory at Yandina moved there from Buderim some years ago. The Buderim ginger farmers began an industry which is now the largest of its kind in the world and earns substantial export income. As well as the factory itself the complex is a noted tourist attraction offering food, drink, sales and entertainment on quite a grand scale. After the visit there we were glad to go back to the resort and flop for an hour or so before the next event.

Our Saturday night outing was to the large pavilion at the Nambour Showgrounds where District 9600 were holding the Conference Dinner. Unusually there was another pavilion nearby in which there were many Rotary and trade exhibits. Fresh fruit in the shape of bananas, pineapples, avocados etc were there for us to carry away. It was a superhuman task to feed nearly 2000 people and it took a little time but most were patient and enjoyed their meal.

One of Australia's most famous but modest Rotarians is R.I. Past president Clem Renouf of Nambour. His main interest now is in Rotary Foundation, and there was Clem looking after the Foundation stand at the D9600 Conference. Somehow Brian discovered Clem had been a pilot in the RAAF and after conferring with the IFFR members present, a decision was made to make Clem an Honorary Member. President Brian presented Clem with his badge and an Australian Section banner, and we hope to see Clem at a fly-in soon.

A bush band with a very enthusiastic elderly on the lagerphone kept us entertained until the fickle weather caught up with us bringing wind and heavy rain. One coach driver was adamant that he was not going until 10.30 but the other one was more accommodating and some members were able to creep quietly away much earlier, unbeknown to the rest.

We had our meeting on Sunday morning and this was a poignant time for most of us as it brought to an end the long time in which Brian

has been our President, our Secretary and our Treasurer. A quiet builder, a man of tremendous resource and dogged determination he has been of inestimable worth to the IFFR in general and to the Australian Section in particular. He has had a partner in Joyce who has supported him and accompanied him in all that he did including keeping the minutes of our meetings until a couple of years ago. Brian made an appeal for someone to take over Secretary/Treasurer and you will be delighted to hear that Alan Grady has offered to take on the job. Quite a lot of us decided to stay on Sunday night and enjoy the fellowship once again.

The following morning some of us inspected Ern & Nola's lovely Malibu during the rain. Ern found the weather to north bad and got no further than Hervey Bay the first day. Malcolm had trouble getting PBV out of the sand.

So ended a very enjoyable weekend with everyone looking forward to the next fly-in. The surplus of \$200 from the fees was donated to the Life Education Centre.

### ***LISMORE (NSW) FLY-IN*** **8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> July 1994**

Our Mini fly-in to Lismore, arranged by the Watsons and Zambellis, was an outstanding success. It was dampened slightly by the occasional shower, but the enthusiasm for fellowship overshadowed the weather. We were delighted with the attendance of around 40 members and partners, and they were very easy to please. Our World President, Brian and Joyce were able to attend and our Australian President, Ern and Nola were also welcomed. Distance doesn't seem to matter when an IFFR fly-in is being held.

Our Mayor and his wife were able to join us for Friday night dinner. He was previously a charter pilot and expressed interest in meeting our members.

On Saturday afternoon, we all enjoyed the scenic bus drives around the coastal towns, visiting some local attractions. Cec Denny was so organised he tried to kidnap some tourists at Macadamia Magic. He enticed them with Custard Apple.

Saturday evening we celebrated Christmas in July at Zambelli's home, complete with Santa Bruce driving the bus, and the great meal served by his helpers Pam and Coralie. Santa and his fairies were there to greet our guests. Our meal was reminiscent of a football match, but everybody found plenty to eat.

Sunday morning we visited the Channon Markets. The Channon is

a small hamlet nearby Lismore. Josie Mockridge was seen buying the weekly green groceries and Graham was happy to carry them. Richard Drabowicz organised a lunch to farewell our guests. His French Patisseries were a real hit.

Many thanks to the Lismore members who hosted this memorable weekend.

*(report by Jan Watson)*

## ***WAGGA WAGGA (NSW) FLY-IN***

**7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> October 1994**

Wagga Wagga is the largest inland city in NSW with a population of around 52,500. It is the centre of a region steeped in natural beauty, diverse agricultural activities and a recreational wonderland. There is also considerable history beginning with early aboriginal culture to the first European explorers commencing with Captain Charles Sturt during his voyage of discovery down the Murrumbidgee River in 1829.

*Stretching from the fringe of the Snowy Mountains in the east to the rolling plains in the west, this is a region where the air is clean and the countryside scenic has something for everyone.*

On the Thursday prior to the Wagga Wagga Fly-In, the temperature was 25 degrees, clear blue sky, and a light southerly breeze 5 to 8 knots. What a start to our fly-in? The front reached Wagga in the early hours of Friday morning bringing very cold southerly winds blowing 20 knots gusting to 30 knots and scattered showers. We were expecting 30 planes in today and a further 5 tomorrow. The total aircraft arrivals for the weekend amounted to 14. The conditions favoured the aircraft arriving from the south and south west.

The first to arrive was Malcolm McClure, who commented on the very ordinary flying conditions. Ron Wooster and his crew had a very bumpy ride with one crew member very pleased to be back on firm ground. Tony Recsei arrived late Friday afternoon from Sydney battling 60kt head winds. The phone ran hot all morning and mid afternoon from people getting weather up dates or cancelling their flights and arriving by car. Bruce Buchanan from Lightning Ridge and Keith Jackwitz from Gatton made valiant attempts to get through but failed. They both tried again on Saturday morning, Keith getting as close as Dubbo before returning home. Good try fellows!

One hundred and one people enjoyed the evening function at the Old Wagga Inn on Friday night. It was a great opportunity to meet with old (*long standing*) and new friends. President Ern welcomed everyone

to the function.

Saturday morning, everyone was bundled into buses for the grand tour of the largest inland city in NSW, and a guided tour of the Botanical Gardens, before having lunch at the Restaurant situated in the Gardens. The Zambellis and Watsons joined us at this stage after driving from Lismore. After lunch we were off on our tour of the RAAF base at Wagga Wagga where the management organised a working day for some of the students, and we were able to observe the instructors and the students in a practical class. The students were mainly working on Macchi Jet trainers, and the IFFR members were encouraged to field questions to the students. Some of the other exhibits we were shown were a Wessex helicopter, Mirage fighter, Winjeel trainer, Sabre fighter and a host of aircraft engines from bygone years. About 4.30pm, the bus dropped everyone back to the motel to relax and prepare for the evening function.

Saturday evening function was a meeting with the Wagga Rotary Club, the senior Rotary club in Wagga Wagga, at the Wagga Commercial Club. The Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga, was chartered in 1930, and there are now five Rotary Clubs in Wagga Wagga. The evening consisted of fine food, great company and a very interesting talk by Don Kendell, the founder of Kendell Airlines. One hundred and fifty people attended the meeting; the IFFR making up one hundred and five members.

The Sunday morning general meeting was well attended by approximately ninety people. After a few hours, when we ran out of time and things to say we adjourned to the civil aerodrome for a farewell B.B.Q prior to the fly/drive home. It was a perfect spring day for flying, 24 degrees and light winds. Wagga Wagga finally displayed the good weather I told you about .

## ***PARAPARAUMU (NZ) FLY-IN***

**3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> February 1995**

Graham Gimblett planned the inaugural fly-in of New Zealand IFFR members to Paraparaumu, a town on the coast, about 40 minutes drive north of Wellington. At that stage forty Rotary flyers were interested in joining the new section, with 2/3 from the North Island and 1/3 from the South Island.

To assist in the first meeting a group of twelve travelled from Australia to be present. They were Ern Nola and Peter Dawes, Brian & Joyce Condon, Malcolm & Phyllis McClure, Barry & Sally Townsend, Graham Mockridge, Rob & Nancy Taylor. Ern flew his Malibu with Nola & Peter via Lord Howe Island and returned via Norfolk Island, Graham Mockridge flew his C210 with Malcolm, Barry and Rob through Lord Howe and Norfolk, returning the same way.

At Paraparaumu we met John Johanson who had just flown his RV4 in a record breaking flight from Adelaide to Christchurch. He built his own aircraft and his flight created some new world records. His ambition is to fly the aircraft to Oshkosh in July. A Mustang added to an excellent program with three Fletchers and six CT4s from the RAAF, plus a host of other performers.

We were the very appreciative guests of Barrie and Railene Mabin at their Deer and Cattle property in Waipukukurau. Barrie took Brian and Joyce for a very interesting flight over the Hawkes Bay area in his C182. The fertility of the country is outstanding, and the fact Barrie runs 400 deer and 1,000 Friesian bulls on 350 hectares is beyond our comprehension. Also Graham runs two dairy cows to the hectare which is normal in New Zealand, but a rarity in Australia.

We found that the fellowship and hospitality of our New Zealand friends was excellent and we would recommend to all of those who have not been to their fine country to try and do so some time in the future. As our nearest neighbour there will now be opportunities of cross Tasman meetings and enhanced fellowship. Already this has become a fact, when we welcomed Graham Gimblett at our Manjimup fly-in.

***HAMILTON (Vic) FLY-IN***  
**18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> February 1995**

Graeme Bond and Barrie Aarons planned the “Mini” Fly-In to Hamilton, regarded as the heart of the Merino wool district.

The weather is good at that time of the year, and the Hamilton Aero Club was anxious to cooperate. We were welcomed at the Airport by Graeme Bond and the members of the Aero Club in their comfortable club house and then enjoyed the BBQ lunch provided. Quite a bit of interest was shown in Ray Addinsell's motor glider. He and Beryl have done some long trips in it including to the west. Amongst the guests for the weekend was the GSE team to be led by Laurie Chapman to Central Canada.

Graeme then gave us a conducted tour of the town which is built on the small stream called the Grange Burn. Our comfortable motel was called The Grangeburn and is built around a garden courtyard which included a pool and a sauna.

Our, first stop on the town tour was at the Ansett Museum. Here were many exhibits of the very full life of Sir Reg. He began by running a car with an extended chassis for extra seats and finished up with a major airline of the world. We were surprised to find that at one time he was involved in the railways but the venture came to nothing. The centrepiece of the museum is a single engine Fokker, not the original, but identical. Dusty Lane was the second pilot to join Ansett Airways after the war and his original wings and badges are exhibited in a showcase. One of Reg's sayings was exhibited. It said that *persistence was the most important quality; without it neither talent, learning, or ability was enough*. Most of us would agree with Reg.

We then went on to the Wool Bales. These are buildings built to look like monster bales and contain many exhibits of the wool industry and local crafts. We had afternoon tea there and the final item was strawberry cream cake. A shearing demonstration had been arranged and there was a most interesting talk from one of Australia's champion shearers. He then set out to shear a sheep in one minute. He actually took a few seconds more but said he was out of practice.

A feature of the Fly-In was the informal dinner at the Motel that night where everybody got to speak to everyone else. A nice meal and good fellowship.

Sunday morning we had a bus tour round the prime wool growing district which surrounds Hamilton. We drove past the property where they received \$1600.30 per kilo for ultra fine wool. The single bale sold for \$1.3million. Our tour terminated at the home of a Hamilton Rotarian,

Geoff & Roma Campbell. The home had been converted into an art gallery, crafts store, and teas. Our meal was served in the garden by the Cavendish CWA. After our sincere thanks to Graeme and Mary for a great weekend we moved back to the Airport for departures.

Graeme and Mary have had letters and phone calls thanking them for a great time. They say that they enjoyed putting it on. Regional Fly-Ins are very successful, often bringing in members who cannot attend the major fly-ins.







