

Bundaberg / Mackay Report by Bill Sharpe

For those who missed the Bundaberg, Rockhampton and Mackay warbirds events, here are some of the highlights.

We arrived at the Bundaberg airfield which felt like a homecoming as we haven't been there for a few years. We were made most welcome. The weather was a bit blowy but most of us flew. During the weekend there was a bad accident of a certain Dornier aircraft. Unfortunately, the pilot wishes to remain anonymous so we are unable to talk about the incident. However, several pilots had many flights over the weekend.

I was amazed to count 15 caravans which stayed at the airfield for the event. A couple of the members from the Bundaberg club came out to camp with us as well to add to the atmosphere and camaraderie.

We would like to thank the two gentlemen from the Bundaberg club who provided all the wood for our nightly campfires and all those who participated in any way to keeping us well fed and warm. A special thanks to Mark Linwood for his Saturday night entertainment, which was greatly appreciated.

After a fantastic weekend and an invitation to please come again next year, seven caravans moved onto the road towards our next stopover at the Rockhampton airfield.

We had a good run not realising there was a huge accident which happened after we had driven through that section of the highway. This resulted in many family members ringing us to see if we were alright.

We arrived at the Rocky airfield to be greeted by Garry De Chastel and his father who is in his 90s and still flies aircraft. The Rocky club charged us \$5 a night which included hot showers and power, which was greatly appreciated. We were able to charge all our gear up for the next flying session.

Unfortunately, the next day was not a good one for our fearless leader as he tripped over and dropped his transmitter as he was landing his B17. This resulted in his beautiful aircraft becoming a re-kitted model. Fortunately, with toothpicks and chopsticks from Ying Potter we were able to, by weeks end, have it back together again.

Tuesday night saw us sitting around another campfire eating leftovers of apple pie and custard for dessert from our Bundaberg feast. No wonder I put on weight while away. We would like to thank the Rockhampton club for their hospitality and friendship during our stayover.

On Wednesday morning we were on the road again heading towards Mackay. The club's airfield is situated in the middle of the cane fields to the west of the city.

This club is lucky enough to own their own field and has a workshop/hangar which would be any other club's dream. The boys put on a wonderful lunch for us on Saturday and organised a bus pick up from the airfield to the local West Tigers Football club where we had a lovely dinner. Quite a few Mackay club members came out to the airfield to fly with us for the weekend and joined us at dinner.

Sitting around the fire on Sunday night we found ourselves talking about the number of

planes we all had over the years. Mick Ryan came up with a wonderful idea..... He is starting a new association called AA (aircraft anonymous). The story went like this..... hi I'm Mick Ryan and I haven't bought a model for three days. Graham Tatts said he hadn't bought a model for at least two days. The next one was... hi I'm Dave and I haven't bought a model off RC Trader for at least an hour and a half. Obviously, the buying of models is an addiction.

As we had a wonderful weekend at Mackay club, we would like to thank them very much for their invitation to attend their club. All of us left on the Monday except for our friends Robbie and Ying who stayed on due to a physical disability.

Some of us headed home while others headed west into the sunset.

That's all for now as I'm off to buy a new plane.

ROCKY WARBIRDS

As expected, the Sharpe's were the first to break camp at Bundy Monday morning for the short trip to Rocky (about 3 hours) followed closely by the rest of the travelling Warbirders. A few of us had chores to do in Bundy – new deep cycle batteries for solar systems, trailer brake parts or some grocery shopping. We all arrived at the RMAC field by early afternoon, however the wind from Bundaberg had followed us up the Bruce Highway and no one flew on the Monday. The pyromaniacs in the group used the afternoon to ensure that plenty of firewood was collected and a large fire Monday night meant the ants were looking for new residences.

Tuesday morning was calm and most campers had numerous flights and were joined by local Club member Craig and his lovely wife Prue. Drew and Garry both pulled out the control-liners and put on an impressive display. The wind picked up a bit during the day and eased again in the late afternoon, where upon Drew put up a Radian glider – 4 of us sat on our chairs and passed the TX along the line for an hour of enjoyable and relaxed flying, hovering in the gentle breeze.

Tuesday night had another rip-roaring fire and a communal feast of left over rump and foil wrapped potatoes and pumpkin followed by apple crumble and custard topped off a really great stay.

A new way to crash was added to the "101 ways to crash":

1. After taking off, walk backwards to the flight line,
2. then trip over the feet of the pilot's box,
3. falling backwards will cause you to throw your TX away,
4. whilst scrambling around trying to pick up your radio, your plane has crashed (and you are not watching it happen).

The B17 came off the worst for wear and looked to be a write-off, however with a bit of Warbirder encouragement and lots of clear Gorilla glue it was reassembled – just now needs four new propellers.

A big thank you to the RMAC Club to allow us to use their facilities – hot shower and "frog-free" toilets. There are more power points here than there are members! It really was a top place to camp. At the back of the Club is a billabong teeming with wildlife – ducks galore and even a black swan. Not the place for a swim though (I'm sure that log moved and dived under the surface?).

MACKAY WARBIRDS

Well, the wind that followed us from Bundy to Rocky then followed us up to MacKay.

The Sharpe's again were the first away from Rocky (Wednesday morning) but followed very closely out the gate by the rest of us. This time a few had laundromat chores and some shopping to do ahead of the 4 1/2 hours' drive. I took a small detour to have a look at Marlborough and St Lawrence townships – without being too harsh, that is a half hour of my life I will not get back again! First to arrive at the Mackay field was Mick and Helen who had been on holidays in the Mackay region and had set up their new rig (MUX and caravan) before the rest of us started trickling in around lunchtime or just after.

A few flights were had that afternoon before the mandatory happy hour. Due to the breeze, we did not light a fire that night and sat inside the big hangar shed with the side doors pulled down and created a lot of hot air ourselves. Has anyone heard of Phillippe Flop? Thursday and Friday saw a few members fit in a bit of sightseeing. The Ryan's headed for Eungella and spotted a couple of platypus in the wild, while the Tattersall's had lunch at the Botanical Gardens pavilion unaware that two huge pythons were sitting in the rafters directly above them. Neville took a drive into town just to go and have a look at them. Both Thursday and Friday followed very similar weather patterns. In the morning the gentle breeze come in from the East. About 10 am the wind swung to the West and picked up considerably before dying down again in the afternoon. Saturday and Sunday were completely different. Although the wind shift happened at 10am the Westerly was very gentle and made for pleasant flying conditions throughout the day. Just about everyone had a flight, although both Dodgee and Dave shared "the least number of flights for the week" booby prize. A ring-in on Sunday was Terry from Phoenix who just happened to be in Mackay visiting family. We were lucky with the weather as Sunday saw about 30mm of rain come down but everyone had already packed up.

As you can see from the photos the area "is green as". The strip was in immaculate condition and very smooth. Every morning there was quite a dew on the grass requiring a bit more power on the ground to gain air speed. The big old trees provided plenty of shade in the pits area, although there was cloud cover every day which kept conditions very pleasant. Daytime temps were around the mid 20's and everyone was wearing shorts – great to get away from the cold SEQ.

Saturday evening, we all headed out to the local West Tigers Sports Club for an excellent evening out, great variety of food and speedy service – beats my camp cooking hands down. These Tigers are doing much better than their Sydney counterparts and were 2022 premiers, however not doing as well this year.

The only fatality I can recall was a Messerschmitt coming down in the outer fields. Nothing a bit of glue will not fix.

SCAF members would very much like to thank the MADRAM committee and members for their great country hospitality and allowing us to use their magnificent field and facilities. The HWS was certainly unique, a diesel fueled "donkey" system which must be a one of a kind, works the same way as a wood chip heater. I'm told the Saturday lunch burgers were amongst the best ever and Sunday lunch sausage sizzle also ranked highly.

Overall, the whole trip North was an outstanding success for all that participated. Great mateship, willingness to help one another out and simply great fun. Thanks go to everyone who pitched in to make it a success and a special thank you to Drew for liaising and organising things at the Rocky and Mackay end, Robbie for cooking, Sharpie for collecting camping money and all the ladies (Ann, Lorrie, Irene and Ying) for helping with shopping and to prepare food.

We will do this trip again but we will all discuss this around the next campfire gathering. Next event is at Phoenix, August 13. However a few of the big trip North participants will not be back in time, having ventured further North and West (Clermont, Longreach and Emerald).

Safe landings

Nic Case
President

SOUTHERN CROSS



AIR FORCE

Email: scafaustralia@gmail.com

Web: southerncrossairforce.com