

## Brisbane to Serpentine WA Meeting March 2024



I thought I'd share our flight story with you for this years RVAA Annual General Meeting. We departed home late February for a leisurely flight over to Western Australia. Oh, the beauty of the RV aircraft, the ability of achieving enormous distances in a relatively short time. In our previous aircraft, what would have taken us a whole day, we can achieve in half the time.

We departed Redcliffe in company with RV14A JBR, co-owned by RVAA member and flying instructor Mahl Oakes. A short hop to Moree where we stopped and luxuriated at the Gywdir caravan park and motel with their 6 artesian pools. It's only a ten minute walk (1000m) from the airport, although we chose a taxi due to the 34 degree temperature of the day. You don't have to leave the complex as it boasts a café open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Their roasts are perfect.

Next day we landed in Broken Hill in extreme heat, where we started to form a flight of RV14's. The first time I had seen three RV14's together. Martin and Val Susans from Canberra, with their lovely 14 made us a threesome, plus now we also had the company of

our secretary Tim and Michelle in their RV6A. After refuelling, Tim's starter motor spat the dummy but so very lucky, the wonderful guys at the airport managed to save the day and installed a loan starter motor so Tim could carry on flying. So lucky!

The next day we flew across to Port Lincoln where we met up with our Safety Officer Montie and Sue Lester in the RV6 and Shane and Sue Finney, in the RV 10. At the generous offer of James Hart, we landed at his Sky Park aerodrome just southwest of Port Lincoln aerodrome. I have written once before about Sky Park and words still can't describe it. We parked our aircraft and James and his mother Di let us explore the museum all afternoon. James then started up his personal bus in which he drove us into Port Lincoln to our accommodation for the night. The next morning James returned with the bus and delivered us back to the Sky Park where we had left the planes for the night. As we were hopping onto our exclusive green charter bus, other tourists were getting into their small buses and boy were they jealous their bus was not as impressive as ours.



1940's Albion Bus, completely restored crash gear box and all

Departing Port Lincoln, our intentions were to land at nearby Elliston and take a short walk to the bakery for morning tea. Alas my planning failed. Today was Sunday, the only day that the Elliston bakery was closed. Bypassed morning tea and proceeded on to Nullarbor

roadhouse for lunch. The gravel strip was great and we taxied all the way up to the rear of the roadhouse and ordered our lunch. A very busy roadhouse, it seems after travelling for hours on end, every motorist and truck driver on the Nullarbor highway must stop for fuel, toilet and refreshments. I made a note on Ozrunways that the strip was in excellent condition and I rated it as a dry weather strip. Overnight, Nullarbor had some rainfall and another east coast RV flyer Richard & Bill bound for Serpentine landed at Nullarbor the next day and to his chagrin, Richard discovered the taxiways muddy, so much so he was forced to remove his wheel spat and remove many kilograms of mud that had lodged up and inside the spat. After lunch we finished the days flying at Forrest, where me finally met up with Carl Bolton and Val Woods from Grafton, in their RV7. Forrest is a place where everyone who has flown over the Nullarbor has stopped for fuel. Resident Managers, Garry and Miriam live there and their nearest neighbours are over a hundred kilometres away.



Hangarage for seven RV's in Forrest's 1923 historic hangar





The east and south coaster travellers. Considering another method of transportation to Serpentine. Luckily common sense prevailed



The once-a-week food delivery made by the Transcontinental for Garry & Miriam at Forrest. Trailer is ready to be filled

Forrest receives all its supplies via the once per week tourist Transcontinental train. The train must stop for mail as Forrest is a registered Post Office. While we helped Garry load up his trailer of food supplies, I noticed Garry hand over one letter to the train staff and they replied with a letter for Garry & Miriam. I wondered if Garry writes himself a self replied letter each week to ensure the train must stop according to Federal postal regulations. The following week, a one in a hundred-year rain event lasted for a week, seeing floods from Kalgoorlie to Forrest. The transcontinental was closed for over a week while track work was conducted to make repairs post the flooding. That week Garry & Miriam would have run out of supplies except for the thoughtful aviators who had rung up and asked if they could bring some supplies out to them. The flooding saw rescue helicopters and fixed wing turbine aircraft out Forrest way looking for lost travellers in floodwaters. This saw the JetA1 supply emptied, and a three month wait for roads to dry and transport trucks to restore their tanks.

Day five saw us landing at Kalgoorlie. A couple of us IFR rated pilots decided to fly IFR on this leg from Forrest to Kalgoorlie. IFR stands for I Follow Rail lines. It was interesting we flew a circular path following the rail lines and the others followed the rhumb line direct.

We got to Kalgoorlie before the others, perhaps the rail line is on the great circle route and is shorter or we simply got better winds. Landing at Kalgoorlie on Monday and we couldn't understand why it was so quiet, a public holiday meant the town was pretty slow. We walked the main street and looked at the opulence and wealth that gold has delivered to this town



The historic York Hotel in Kalgoorlie's main street

Remember my last newsletter article praising the virtues of travelling in company, the safety and assistance one expects if one has a breakdown?





Safety Officer Montie inspecting my workmanship as I replace a brake line. Knew I carry a bag of tools for a reason.

The next morning, I was refuelling at Kalgoorlie and Suzanne noticed fluid dripping out of the wheel spat. Ouch, I had a bad feeling. It had stormed the night before and I was praying that it was just water, although I knew water could never have made its way into the wheel space. Quick examination of the fluid proved it was brake fluid. Just before I left home I had had a conversation with Carl Bolton about making the trip over and what spare parts I was carrying. Carl strongly advised that I should carry an O ring for the brake calliper. So I put one in. Whew, I felt relieved. However, I had a nagging doubt that it was not going to be that easy. I had only overhauled the callipers twelve months earlier due to flooding in my hangar and the wheels and brakes being immersed. It should not be the calliper. I pulled the spat off and discovered the oil leak was coming down the leg fairing and the calliper was dry. Fairing removed and we discovered a microscopic crack in the aluminium brake line just under the joint on the bottom of the fuselage. I looked at it and realised that this fitting was immobile and the undercarriage leg was moving up and down all the time. No wonder the metal brake line developed a crack. The brake line has done 600 landings and was 650 hours old. I was just thankful that I was not in Forrest when this happened. I found the owner of Goldfield Air Services, Dugald and what a friend he was. He told me that he owned a fully equipped workshop and I could have anything in the shop except his LAME who was flat out.

Dugald took me to his workshop and got his LAME to source a length of brake line and a flaring tool, brake fluid and a bleeding gun. An hour later we were fixed and ready to move once more. I have now ordered flexible braided brake lines from Aircraft Specialty Flight lines (USA) and will be replacing the solid aluminium brake lines ASAP. My flying RVAA companions stayed with me the whole time, lent a hand and wouldn't leave us stranded until the brake line was replaced. What greater flying companions could one ask for?

Serpentine was our next destination. We arrived on the Tuesday to be met by Zak and Bo. They had arranged the bus hire and we were on our way to Rockingham to commence our stay in Western Australia. The next day utilising the RVAA bus we toured Freemantle and had a wonderful time visiting the old Freemantle gaol and Shipwreck Museum. The museum was wonderful, and we spent a lot of time studying the Batavia wreck, the seventeenth century shipwreck has been painstakingly put back together using the actual ships timbers, the information about Australia's first visitors and shipwreck survivors was tremendous. Particularly, as we were about to visit the actual site of the shipwreck in the next seven days.

The next day saw all the east coast flyers get into our RV's and take a short hop skip and jump (12 minutes) flight to Rottnest Island. We spent the day touring the island and for some brave hearts swimming. The water was too cold for this Brisbane boy.

Friday and Saturday were dedicated to the RVAA AGM. All in all, we had fourteen flyers and family make their way from the east to Serpentine and join the multitude of RV owners domiciled in Western Australia. 61 Registered for the AGM, a phenomenal turnout.

In addition to the CASA and ATSB representatives, we had Paul from FlyLEDS, David from Agile Insurance and Lachie from Lock Chocks. Lachie was accompanied by his mother Karin, because Lachie is only 14 years old running his own business making computer printed wheel chocks, throttle locks, fuel test holders, BOSE headset control holders amongst his other stock of items.

Our AGM was a tremendous success, and we were sad to fly out the next day. Lachie and his mum invited us to morning tea at their property just near the White Gum restaurant that Zak had recommended for Sunday Lunch.



No wonder Lachie is an aero nerd, just look at the photograph of their family home.



Lachie's home and airstrip including control tower.

Have you ever wished that there could be a dinner venue not far from your home aerodrome? Well for the Perth members, White Gum aerodrome and restaurant is just that. What a quirky place not far from Perth. Great runway with two 737's parked up next to the runway. Lunch was huge and delicious, and the vibe of the outdoor dining area was pure outback. It was here we departed for Geraldton. Others headed south for the wine district, and some headed east for the long journey home. It was the latter flyers who got caught up in the massive rain event which started up in the Kimberley region and headed straight down the centre of WA towards the Bight. Martin and Carl both got stuck for several days, either in Kalgoorlie or Esperance. I'm not sure which would be the better of the two destinations to be holed up for many days, but so much safer than trying to fight against

mother nature. We had amazing weather for the remainder of our trip and seemed to dodge the weather bullet.

After lunch at White Gum we flew direct to Geraldton. A lovely town with an extraordinary Museum where we gathered more information regarding the wreck of the Batavia. The following day we flew nearly 40 miles offshore to the Abrolhos Islands, yes we were wearing our life jackets. A spectacular coral reef collection of islands.



Hundreds of fisherman's huts and jetties spread out everywhere on the islands



Abrolhos Islands reefs and lagoons 50 nautical miles long



We had to obtain permission to land on East Wallabi Island from the National Parks Service, took less than an hour on the internet and it was FREE. The island has a strip of 650 metres, that had no obstructions and was a straight in flat approach with heaps of room and opportunity to make a go around if you misjudged it. For an RV, it was very straight forward and simple. I pulled up before halfway down the strip. The strip was in excellent condition, however I would rate it as a dry weather strip only. The strip was next to Turtle Bay and five minutes later we were walking along the pristine white beach watching seals swimming amongst the tourists off the beach. Yes we weren't the only tourists, a Charter Cessna from Kalbarri had flown in and a tourist boat from Geraldton was anchored in Turtle Bay. It was a bucket list destination and the water was just warm enough for a Brisbane boy to go swimming in.

We departed Geraldton and headed coastal south past Perth and suburbs for Busselton. Coastal past Perth has a VFR route that takes you all the way outside controlled airspace, nearly as good as Victor 1 past Sydney. Landing at Busselton we spent the next three days exploring Busselton, Margaret River and Cape Leeuwin areas.

The next leg was Esperance. Remember that weather I spoke of earlier it caught up to us eventually. Mahl & I flew IFR to Esperance due to weather, up at 10,000' we just sat on top of the thick clouds before eventually descending into Esperance using RNP approach. We had a couple of days at Esperance. During that time, I rang the phone number you find on the bottom of the GAF forecast. I spoke to a real meteorologist who assured me that weather for our departure the next day would be VMC with some low cloud leaving Esperance and clearing up to CAVOK at Forrest. Owing to the lack of HF radios in our RV's, Mahl and I were restricted to VFR flight rules. If you can't maintain VHF communications with ATC you cannot fly IFR, at Forrest you can only receive ATC at 11,000' and higher. The next morning, we departed Esperance with scattered cloud at 1500' and flew to Forrest for fuel and then on to Port Augusta for an overnight. Crossing the Nullarbor revealed a green and wet landscape, in contrast to the red dry desert on our flight over. Blue sky allowed us to climb up to 9,500' and catch tail winds giving us cruise speeds in excess of 200 knots ground speed, don't you just love cruising at 200+ knots!



Flying IFR 10,000' on top of solid cloud



Nullarbor Plain  
which is normally  
red and dry. Note  
the lakes of water  
lying on the ground  
everywhere

We stayed the night at Port Augusta. We've been there before and it's a lovely historic town, however, after a short walk to Coles we decided that it is much safer staying indoors. Its changed and getting a little bit wild on the streets.

We arrived home showing 40 hours of flying. It was a great adventure. Next year, the AGM will be held in Queensland (location to be determined) and we are looking forward to exploring outback Queensland, mixing it up with the AGM.

Alan & Suzanne Carlisle



**Lowes Fuel Sponsorship Announcement:**

Lowes has been sponsoring the RVAA in 5 cents fuel discount from the beginning. This year Lowes agreed to sponsor the winner of the person who flew the longest distance to attend the Annual General Meeting with awarding them 200 litres of Avgas valued at approximately \$600, free. What a great corporate sponsor, thanks Lowes and specially Troy Martin (Aviation Manager) for this generous support. This year's winner was Tim Ellerton.

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**FYE LAUNCH OF ST.COLUMBINES SECONDARY COLLEGE RV12**

**Ashley to supply written piece and photo's**









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## Result of elections

The following members were elected to the Management team at the AGM at Serpentine.  
Please feel free to reach out to our working team.

Alan Carlisle	(Qld)	President	<a href="mailto:alancarlisle@optusnet.com.au">alancarlisle@optusnet.com.au</a>
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John Brumpton	(SA)	Vice President	<a href="mailto:jbrumpton@gmail.com">jbrumpton@gmail.com</a>
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Richard Raymond	(Qld)	Treasurer	<a href="mailto:crwrbr@gmail.com">crwrbr@gmail.com</a>
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Tim Ellerton (Qld) Secretary [tellerto@bigpond.net.au](mailto:tellerto@bigpond.net.au)

Sian Rickards (Vic) Face book moderator [sian.rickards@gmail.com](mailto:sian.rickards@gmail.com)

Montie Lester Safety Officer [montie\\_lester@yahoo.com.au](mailto:montie_lester@yahoo.com.au)

**Committee Members**

Doug McCullough (Qld) [doug.mac1946@gmail.com](mailto:doug.mac1946@gmail.com)

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