

WINTERMAIL

EAA CHAPTER 25

MINNEAPOLIS / ST PAUL, MN

May 2011

An Australian Adventure by Pat Hoyt



The North Queensland Aero Club's victorious A-Team (see page 5)

Recently my wife (Mary) and I journeyed to Australia in celebration of her 50th birthday. Being long-time EAA members and homebuilders, part of our vacation planning included establishing contact with Australian homebuilders who lived in the regions we were going to visit.

We've always enjoyed meeting fellow aviation enthusiasts. Some of our most enjoyable times have been in the company of aviators who we've met at various places. From small fly-ins at places like Brodhead and Cloverdale, to larger events like Oshkosh - we've met so many wonderful people and have made some lasting friendships.

So what possible better way to see the "real Australia" than to

spend time with people who live there and who share the same passion for aviation and homebuilding that we do...?

We began planning and researching our trip well in advance. We learned about such things as Box Jellyfish, Dengue Fever, and Vegemite. Fellow EAA Chapter 25 member Peter Denny shared a lot of interesting information about his homeland with us. We kept an eye on the status of some massive flooding in northern Queensland, and when Cy-

clone Yasi hit we questioned the wisdom of planning a vacation into what the news media described as a disaster area.

Fortunately we had made contact with local people in several areas who were able to provide first-hand accounts of the actual local conditions, so we continued as planned.

On March 17th we flew commercial out of MSP (Minneapolis) to LAX (Los Angeles). Our flight was scheduled to arrive mere minutes before *(Continued on page 3)*

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Koser's Comments



Hope everyone is getting some flying hours in – more than I am anyway... Have you seen Gary Rene's airplane since it got its paint job? - Beautiful!

Our May meeting will be at BSAEC with Pat Hoyt featured as our speaker describing his recent trip to Aussie-land. We'll meet at the usual time with the grill on just after 6P.

If you haven't been at BSAEC recently, you'll notice some progress on the Pietenpol building project. The group has been busy and is working on setting up wing construction.

Last month's visit to MSP tower facilities was a good one. We were fortunate to have a guide who had the visit very well organized. What a great location the tower is to view a sunset!

A big event in our chapter year is our fund-raiser. Terry will have the tickets stuffed and ready to hand out at the May meeting. **Please** plan to work on getting those tickets sold and the funds returned. This project is what funds our Chapter 25 activities/scholarships each year and it's critical that **all** our chapter members participate. Selling a book of 5 raffle tickets for \$10 is a pretty easy task, so here's hoping all will participate and sell six books. Terry will discuss first, second, and third prizes when he hands out tickets.

If you are willing to sell tickets at fly-ins, please contact Terry as well. We'll be offering tickets for sale to parents at the YE events also, and we could use some members volunteering to be in charge of those sales. Will you help us here?

Young Eagle activities this month will be major, with about 75 kids coming on the 14th to try to make up for not having good weather last month. On the 21st is our regular YE rally, and Bill assures me we'll have a crowd. If you haven't worked on ground crew and would like to interact with kids and be part of one of our biggest successes, consider joining us. Just let Bill Brown know that you'd like to work with us. Just seeing kids' grins after they land makes it all worthwhile.

—John



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ON FINAL



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The Leader In Recreational Aviation

This Month: Wed Evening May 18th—BSAEC at LVN

**Grill on at 6pm, Meeting starts at 7pm
Bring something to share!**

Program: Pat Hoyt will present a slide show of their Australian Adventure.

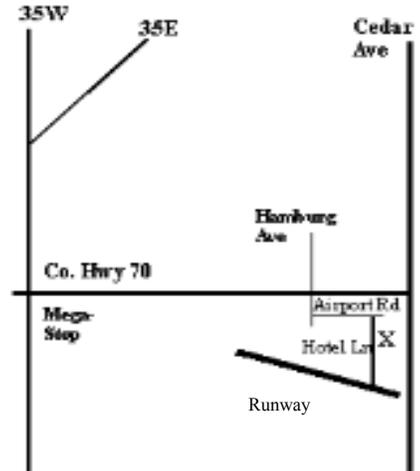
Saturday, May 14th: Young Eagles Special Edition, 9am at BSAEC

Saturday, May 21st: Regular Young Eagles event at BSAEC

Saturday, June 18th: Annual Picnic at noon with Young Eagles at 9am

Directions to BSAEC (Chapter Hangar at Airlake):

South on I-35 to Hwy 70 (Megastop), then East to Hamburg Ave (3rd stop sign.) Right turn and South to airport perimeter road. Left on airport perimeter road then right on Hotel or India Lane. If the surface is firm, please park on space between hangars.



Note: Special Edition Young Eagles Event 9am May 14th—Contact Bill Brown to Volunteer!!!

Australian Adventure (From Page 1)

the connecting flight to Sydney was scheduled to depart, and despite our questioning of such tight scheduling, the airline repeatedly assured us that there would be "plenty of time". Our flight arrived in LAX roughly on time, but of course (of course!) there was a delay at the arrival gate, and so we sat on the tarmac, with the connecting flight to Sydney visible at an adjacent gate, literally yards away - and passing it's departure time...

Eventually we got a gate, and the crew let us get off the aircraft first. They had already told us that we might not make it to our connecting flight, and they suggested that we "run fast". As we reached the deserted gate for the Sydney flight, the jet-way attendant there said, "you must be the people from Minnesota". So they must have been expecting us. We were relieved to make it onto the flight with at least our carry-on bags, as having to delay an extra night at LAX would also have impacted a flight we had scheduled out of Sydney the next day.

Thus began the long flight over the Pacific Ocean...

We landed in Sydney on the morning of March 19th, having crossed the International Date Line. Surprisingly, our checked bags also made it, which I'll never understand given the rush we had just to make it onto the plane. It was raining in Sydney, but since we don't visit there very often we ignored the weather and went walking around.

Eventually we discovered that we could buy tickets for a local bus and ride around town. As the sun set we made our way back to the hotel, seeing some huge fruit bats on the way. These bats have about a 4 foot wingspan, and when they flap their wings it sounds like a rug being shaken. We hung around the concierge lounge of the hotel where we



*Celebrating Mary's 50th birthday
at the Great Barrier Reef.*

shared dinner and drinks with some interesting people. This was a theme that was to recur many times over the next three weeks...

The next morning we caught a Qantas flight out of Sydney and flew to Cairns, which is in northeastern Queensland.

We rented a car in Cairns. Given that they drive on the left side of the road in Australia, I became the designated driver (I had previous experience driving on that side of the road when I was stationed on Okinawa in the early 1980's while in the US Marine Corps). It didn't take long to get the hang of driving on that side of the road, but I believe it's worse for the passenger, if the frequent gasps emanating from the other seat were any indication.

(Continued on page 4)

Australian Adventure (From Page 3)

We also rented a GPS, which proved to be invaluable. I had zero experience with GPS's before, but after having spent time driving around in a strange and far-away land, I can tell you they are absolutely worthwhile. There is a significant amount of stress reduction that takes place when you come to the realization that it is impossible to get lost (short of an unlikely malfunction or breakage of the GPS unit itself). This GPS actually talked! "Turn left on Kamarunga road in 600 meters", "Destination on right in 200 meters", "Perform a U-turn when possible". All in a mechanical, female voice with an Australian accent. At times it was almost like being nagged by a second wife...

Our first stop was the Lillybank Bed and Breakfast, which we used as our "base of operations" for the next eight days as we explored the Cairns area. We did all the tourist stuff like visiting the Great Barrier Reef, riding the Kuranda Scenic Railway up a mountain, and then taking a cable car back down, and visiting a local zoo. We made friends with some fellow travelers from Canada and others from England who stayed there for several days with us. One particularly humorous event took place when a neighbor's dog started barking, and the house "Galah" (a large pink & white parrot) would bark back at it.



Our "Home away from home" at the Lillybank B&B in Cairns, Queensland.

As we began exploring the Cairns area we were struck with how everything that we saw was "different". The trees, the flowers, the bugs. Everything. It was all new and different.

But above all else - throughout the whole country - there was a common theme of meeting great people, like fellow Zodiac builders David and Connie Graham who live in nearby Atherton, Queensland.

We met David near a local school, and then followed him out to his hanger at the Atherton airport. David and I took his Jabiru 3300 powered Zodiac 601XL-B for a ride while Jon Collins (David's building partner) and Mary went up in a Jabiru J-160.



David Graham's beautiful Zodiac

The air was smooth as glass, and the local countryside, the Atherton Tablelands, was absolutely beautiful. After about an hour playing in the clouds in the Zodiac, we landed on Atherton's grass strip and then took a Jabiru J-230 up for a ride. The J-230 is a stable, high wing aircraft with great ground visibility, which was a pleasure to fly.



J-160 and J-230 Jabiru's in the hanger.



One of the Atherton Tableland's Crater Lakes.

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Australian Adventure (From Page 4)



In the pattern at the Atherton Airport.

We spent most of the day at the Atherton airport, talking about airplanes and meeting local pilots like Mark, who had a crop duster, and other wonderful people. We also made friends with "Max", the local airport dog. That evening David and Connie invited us into their home where we met their family and shared dinner.

David and Connie invited us to the North Queensland Aero Club, which was having a "trivia night" at the Cairns airport. We attended, and our table, the "A Team" (see photo on cover) was victorious, despite Mary & I being somewhat weak on Australian trivia. But we had a great time, with plenty of good food and drink, well into the wee hours. Once again, the thing that I'll always remember is the wonderful people that we met. The men and women of the North Queensland Aero Club are cut from the same cloth as the people from any EAA chapter. Just plain good people, with a wealth of experience and fascinating ideas. What a privilege it was to get to know them.

We drove up to nearby Port Douglas, which is north of Cairns, on the Coral Sea. This was closer to what would have been the front lines had the Japanese been able to invade northeastern Australia in WWII, and Port Douglas would have been a logical location from which to stage defensive operations of the Cairns area.

There have been rumors of a shipment of British Spitfires said to have arrived late (after the tide of the war had turned) and the enemy had been pushed back beyond the limited range of the Spitfires, with the then-unneeded Spitfires not being worth the trouble to uncrate.

I didn't see evidence of any Spitfire relics, but Australia is a big country, and there's no way to know what's been squirreled away in remote buildings or old mining shafts - or what condition any such artifacts would be in after the passage of so much time. I did notice that an old pub that we visited could have originally been an old hanger, as it was

similar in construction to the big Navy hangers on Fleming Field of the same era which are near my home. There was no other sign that there had ever been an airport or military installation in the area that we visited, as far as I could tell, but of course we only saw a very tiny sliver of the area. One thing I do know for certain, though, is that Australians are patriotic. There were local plaques and historical markers honoring the battle of the Coral Sea, as well as a park that honored local servicemen, including those who'd been awarded the Victoria Cross.

Eventually the day came to say goodbye to Cairns. Although we'd only been there 8 days, it felt like a lot longer. We felt like we'd known our new friends for years, and we promised to keep in touch and hopefully meet again someday. The sadness of saying goodbye to such wonderful people was only slightly tempered by the knowledge that we had more adventures ahead of us...

We set off down highway A-1, also known as the Bruce Highway, which is basically a two lane country road in that part of Australia. Our next destination was Magnetic Island, which is just off the coast near Townsville.

Magnetic Island is said to be named for a disturbance in the compass of Captain Cook's ship as he sailed through the region. Today there is no sign of any local magnetic disturbance, and only the story remains. We spent 2 days at Magnetic Island, where it rained for most of that time.

We refused to let the rain stop us, so we went hiking and saw Rock Wallabies, a wild Koala, and numerous strange and beautiful birds and insects. We shared an interesting evening with our Australian hosts, along with a couple from Great Britain, and another couple from Canada.



I thought of Bob and his son at Dragonfly Aviation when I took this photo.

The rain really began to pick up, with the area into which we were to drive getting 2 feet in one day with no letup in sight, rendering the Bruce Highway impassible. At this point we had to change our plans, so we started driving inland. We reached one point where the road was almost entirely flooded with the exception of a dirt strip along one shoulder. Had the water

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Australian Adventure (From Page 5)

been a few inches higher, our car would not have been able to make it through.

As twilight approached, we found lodging in a small mining town called Clermont. While checking into the last available room in town, the hotel manager noticed the Pietenpol on my shirt, and asked me if I'd ever been to Cherry Grove. Turns out he was a pilot too, and had just returned from a vacation in the US where he had purchased a new Cirrus and was having it shipped back to Australia. We talked for hours...

Having taken a long detour around the flooded regions, we again drove towards the coast, spending the next few days in Rockhampton and Hervey Bay, and passing through Bundaberg on our way to Gympie, which is the home town of fellow airplane builders Phill & Kerrie Barnes, and their son Dan.

Phill Barnes is nearly finished with an exceptionally beautiful Jabiru 3300 powered Zenith Zodiac that he is building in a shed out in the country. The workmanship on this aircraft is impressive, and I have adopted one of his ideas (a secondary canopy latch mechanism) for my own airplane. We spent a couple of very enjoyable days with Phill and his wife, Kerrie, touring the local countryside and visiting nearby towns.



Phill Barnes (in the FlyCorvair.com hat) and Pat Hoyt

Meeting Phill's brother and parents was an added treat, as Phill comes from a family of uber-motorheads. His brother salvaged an engine from an old Subaru wreck that nobody wanted, and transformed it into a reliable "sleeper" that is quicker off the line than any of the other local hot-rods. Phill's father is a man of tremendous talent and knowledge. His current project is a homebuilt jet engine. He also showed us a Subaru EA-81 engine that he modified to run on Hydrogen. It's truly amazing what can be found in a little machine shop out in the country. Phill's father survived a shark attack while he was in the Navy, and he actually had the jaws of the shark that attacked him. He was working on a ship and for some reason fell into the water. Before his buddies could cast him a line, a shark was on him. Luckily he had a knife and was able to stab the shark off his leg while his

colleagues gaff-hooked it and shot it. They hauled both him and the shark onboard, and while the medics were stitching his leg, he cut out the jaws of the 10 foot hammerhead, which he still has. He showed us a bullet that was still lodged in its jaw where one of his buddies had shot it through the head.



Phill Barnes' beautiful Zodiac sets a very high standard for workmanship.

We did some fun local touring with Phill & Kerrie, and shared some fun cultural anecdotes. We learned what it meant when something "goes all pear shaped", and they in turn learned all about the "Hawaiian good luck sign" that was made famous by the men of the USS Pueblo. That evening we shared pizza and a local drink consisting of beer and root beer, and had a wonderful time.

Once again, the time arrived when we had to say farewell to some very good people in order to continue the journey. We bade Phill and his family goodbye, and early the next morning we set course towards Brisbane.

Our next destination was the home of Volunteer Coast Guard Commodore Ian Ratcliffe, just south of Brisbane. Ian is also building a Zodiac, and has a Corvair engine mounted on it. Ian and his friends are building two airplanes, and they alternate working on one and then the other each week. Ian shared interesting "search and rescue" stories with us as we looked over his airplane.

Pat Hoyt and Ian Ratcliffe with Ian's Corvair powered Zodiac.



(Continued on page 7)

Stuff for Sale/Wanted

For Sale: \$15,500. LSA 2003 Challenger II CWS, 145 TTAE, DCDI Rotax 503, Tall Drive, EIS with CHT/EGT/ALT/VSI. Like new condition, 2003 Copper State champion, N numbered. Hinged windscreen door, GPS, intercom PTT, headsets, portable radio, LED strobe, nav/landing lights, custom seats, fiberglass gear/nosecone/wingtips. Hydraulic brakes. 2 doors, 2-blade Tennessee prop., electric fuel pump, nicad coated muffler, full VFR instrument panel. Craig Rodemaker at 952-270-5739 or croddo@earthlink.net

For Sale: Lancair 320/360 kit, Super-Fastbuild kit. Asking \$20,000 or offer. Call 608/797-5752.



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CLAY ADAMS

Australian Adventure (From Page 6)

All too soon it was time for us to continue south. When we said goodbye Ian mentioned that he has been to Airventure several times, and that he and his two brothers would be going to Oshkosh this year as well, so we know we'll be seeing him again.

By this time the highway started to look more like an American interstate, so a few miles south of Brisbane we turned off on a coastal road and found lodging at a dumpy hotel near the beach. Once again it was raining hard, but Mary & I were hungry so we set out on foot, in search of adventure.

We found a nice Thai restaurant that served uncharacteristically bland food. But when they discovered that we were from Far Away, and that we liked "real" Thai food, they proudly mixed up some kind of red pepper concoction that really spiced up the noodles. Clearly (to the restaurant staff) we had different tastes than their usual clientele. As we made our way back to the hotel the rain stopped, and we slept for a few hours before getting up in time to watch a beautiful sunrise over the Pacific.



Mary watches a beautiful sunrise over the Coral Sea.

That day we drove about half of the remaining way to Sydney. We stayed with a Frenchman and his Sri Lankan wife, and their dog "George" at their beautiful house on the ocean. We also visited the local rain forest, where of course we got rained on.

The following morning we completed our trek to Sydney, and the next morning we caught a flight back across the Pacific to the US. One final interesting thing that (Continued on page 8)

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Chapter Events and Fly-Ins

May 18th More on Pat & Mary Hoyt's Australian Adventure at BSAEC
(see page 3 for map & directions)

May 14th Young Eagles Special Edition- Start at 9am

May 21st Regular Young Eagles start at 9am- Contact Bill Brown to volunteer

June 18th Annual Picnic & YE's

Future meetings 6/15, 7/20, 8/17, 9/21, 10/19, 11/16, 1/18, 2/15, 3/21, 4/18, 5/16

May 21 Hibbing Mn (HIB) 11a-3p
EAA996 Chili Feed
Old Arrowhead Hangar
www.eaa996.org

May 21-22 Blaine Mn ANE
Blaine Aviation Days 763/568-6072
www.BlaineAviationDays.org

Jun 5 Reedsburg Wi.C35 7a-noon
Fly-In Bkfst Craig Hillman
608/524-6448

chillman@amfam.com
Jun 11-12 Hancock Mn

Fly/drive/camp-in
Brown's Private Airport
Pork Roast on Sat 4p-?
320/392-5869, 320/760-7749
Jun 12 Albert Lea Mn (AEL) 7-12:30p
Fly-In Breakfast PICs free.
Jun 12 Montevideo Mn (MVE) 8-1p
Fly-In Bkfst & car show
Jun 19 Stillwater Mn (21D) 8a-1p
Pancake Bkfst Lk Elmo Airport
pao-stx-cap@comcast.net

Australian Adventure (From Page 7)



Walking to a beach somewhere between Brisbane and Sydney.

we saw as we arrived at LAX was a huge Russian Antonov An-124 with its tail open and its nose flipped up, obviously in preparation for loading of some kind of large cargo.

Thus ended our 3 week adventure in Australia. We were sad to leave that wonderful country, but we've got the memories that will last a lifetime. Before this trip, when I thought of Australia I envisioned Ayers Rock, red desert sand, and kangaroos. But now that I've been there, my thoughts are of the rain forests, the beaches, the roads, and the beautiful sunrises over the Coral Sea.

But above everything else, when I think of Australia now, my thoughts are of all of the amazing, wonderful and generous people that Mary and I had the honor to meet.



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