

**WCAC QUEENSLAND FLY AWAY JULY 11th -22nd / BORDER OPEN /
PASSES APPROVED/ Report as Follows:**

Bill & Joyce were anxious to commence the Adventure & arrived in Bourke on Thursday the 9th July in his Jabiru. Roger & Lyn decided to go Fri 10th to Bourke in the Tecnam before the weather closed in on Saturday . The Turners met up with Bill & Joyce & stayed at the Port of Bourke Hotel. The owner had trouble with the plumbing with limited toilets to use, No showers & no meals that night. A great start to our trip away. They visited The Bourke Wharf which was a replica of the original wharves. In the 1850s, the Darling River was opened up as a key transport route. Visited the heritage-listed Bourke Court House designed in the Federation Free Style, constructed in rough cast rendered brick & face brick, roofs clad in slate tile covered open walkways.



Port Bourke Hotel

Saturday 11th July They were fogged in till lunch time before flying to **Quilpie QLD** . At the Bourke Airport the Terminal was named after Nancy Bird -Walton in honour of her flying career. Our Captain of Flying John in his Mooney & his passengers Col & Mal managed to get out of Wagga Saturday & met up with Roger & Bill at Bourke Airport. They continued on to Quilpie Airport where John's friend Greg from Brisbane arrived in his Lancair Super ES to join us for some of the trip. Steve Kitson in his Bonanza & passengers Ralf & Jan Walker & Greg Bannon were grounded in Wagga on Sat 11th due to inclement weather with low cloud & managed to fly out on Sun 12th where they spent the night at White Cliffs .

Quilpie is in Channel Country on the banks of the Bulloo River. It is on the Diamantina Developmental Road, 208 kilometres (129 mi) west of Charleville and 980 kilometres (610 mi) west of the state capital, Brisbane. In the 2016 census, Quilpie had a population of 595 people. The economy of the area is based on the grazing and mining industries. The area has one of the largest deposits of boulder opal in the world and also has extensive deposits of gas and oil.



Quilpie Heritage Inn

The Group had drinks in the beer garden at the Quilpie Heritage Inn which was built first in 1921 & destroyed by fire 1925. The 2 Story Building was rebuilt in 1926 by local identity Jimmy Corones (Jimmy & his brother Harry were Greek migrants who had business success with the extraordinary hotel empire they built in Western QLD in the 1920s). Hotel Corones in Charleville is Heritage -Listed also . We enjoyed a home cooked meal back at our motel which left us very satisfied. Quilpie is a clean, tidy town which feels inviting to visit . We went walk about to St Findbarrs Catholic Church to see the boulder opal Altar and around the town, talked to some locals & enjoying a coffee before flying on to Longreach.



Boulder Opal Altar

Sunday 12th July Then we all headed off to Longreach to stay over night. Boeing 747, 707, Connie & DC3 all under an enormous cover to protect the planes from QLD hot weather.- We went to see the Luminescent Longreach [Light & Sound Show] at the Qantas Founders Museum. The Historic aircraft are used as a canvas upon which 3D animation & illustrations weave a narrative of the spirit of early aviation, world wars , distant places to present day . We were fortunate to see it as it only

commenced showing on the 1st July 2020. Then we all went for Dinner where Roger caught up with his cousin Lorna.



Luminescent Longreach

Monday 13th July The Mooney ,Lancair, Tecnam & Jabriu continued on there way to refuel at Cloncurry , where finally we met up with Steve Kitson & passengers in the Bonanza. We all than continued on our way up to Karumba in the Gulf. Karumba is a coastal town in the Gulf of Carpentaria, at the mouth of the Norman River downstream from Normanton. In the 2016 census, Karumba had a population of 531 people.



Karumba in the Gulf



Karumba Sunset

We settled into our rooms & looking forward to our Croc & Crab tour including food / drinks and watching the Gulf Sunset. Very disappointed that we couldn't go because of the very windy weather. We compromised with having tea at the Sunset Tavern & enjoying the glorious sunset with our beers & wine. Greg in his Lancair left the Group & went to Cairns to see his daughter than joined us again at Airlie Beach.

Tuesday 14th July Leaving the Gulf we headed to Normanton to refuel than east to Undara. Landed on a Grass Airstrip in the middle of nowhere where a mini bus took us 10kms to the Undara Experience Lodge . The Undara Volcanic National Park is situated 275 kilometers southwest of Cairns just off the Gulf Development Road. The park was established in 2009 to protect Australia longest lava tube and the unique fauna and flora found of the area. The Undara Experience is designed and produced by the Collins family, the earliest white settlers in this locality whose cattle have grazed in the area since 1862. Gerry Collins, a fourth generation member of this pioneering family, applied to develop a tourist facility to showcase the lava tubes located on his family holding, 'Rosella Plains Station', in 1987. They have another property nearby called 'Spring Creek.' Gerry believed the best way to protect these dramatic, ancient formations for future generations lay in developing a sustainable visitor experience, managed to lessen the environmental impact but highlight the unique ecology and geology of the cave system. The Lodge facility is managed by the Collins Family . **Tues** late afternoon we went on a sunset tour with cheese & wine to help us enjoy the magnificent landscape & sunset & going into a cave where the Micro Bats call home. After getting back to the Lodge we enjoyed a delicious meal under a large steel dome structure in the dining area to represent the Lava Tubes.

Wednesday 15th July Wed 7am we were treated to a cooked Bush Brekky with Billy tea , freshly brewed coffee and enjoying the sounds of the birds . 10am we went on our guided tour of Undara Lava Tubes, a sight worth seeing. Abby Moore our driver & guide gave us the history how the Lava Tubes formed, too much information to take in. A few stairs to climb down in the tubes [no good for the arthritic knees,

most complaints came from Lyn] Back to the Lodge 1pm for lunch, afternoon free than all met up again for Happy Hour than another delicious meal under the dome.



Undara Lava Tube

Thursday 16th July We continued on to Forsayth Airfield to refuel & park the planes for 2 nights stay before catching the Cobbold Gorge Tour bus to the Lodge an hrs journey . Well what can I say the dirt road was very corrugated, we all lost a few kilos with the vibrations all the way . Mustn't be good for towing caravans, need to go slow about 20 -40 kmh. **Cobbold Gorge** is on the Robin Hood Cattle Station [330,000 acre]. Robin Hood Station, supposedly named because it adjoined the Sherwood mining lease, was originally owned by the Clark family. James Clark, from Cornwall, England, immigrated to Australia and married Amelia Trigger from Townsville in 1866. 1901 was when it is believed they took up Robin Hood. A lot of time was spent cattle mustering. In 1929 James Clark died, leaving Robin Hood to his eldest son, Edward, who by then had already taken on the responsibility of running the property. When Edward (Eddie) Clark retired, his son Teddie took over the property.

Cob Terry was on a cattle buying trip in the Georgetown area when he met Teddie Clark. The Terry family purchased Robin Hood Station in 1964. Simon Terry in 1994 discovered the towering Cobbold Gorge with its beauty, emerald waters towering arches , some stand more than 30m tall. The family wanted to share it with the public for them to enjoy its untamed beauty, so the ultimate outback adventure began in 2009. A nature refuge agreement with the QLD Environment & Resource Management was formed. 4,720 Hectare Cobbold Gorge Nature Refuge was established. The cattle property is still operating along side tourism

Friday 17th July We went on our guided Gorge tour , a boat ride on the water with the towering sandstone arches either side with beautiful colours in the rocks [the WOW factor]. We than walked around the rocky outcrops to the fully glassed bridge over the gorge which was built in 2019, a great view below in the narrow chasm. At night we enjoyed our meal back at the Lodge



Cobbold Gorge

Saturday 18th July We left the Savannah Gulf for a sea change to Airlie Beach [Gateway to the Whitsundays] for 2 night stay, located 1,123 kilometres north of Brisbane. The two nearest airports to Airlie Beach are located on Hamilton Island and in the nearby town of Proserpine. The Group flew to Shute Harbour, a difficult strip to find & tucked away in the bay, Roger had difficulty finding it , some of the others as well. Settled into our Ocean view rooms and went up to the Yacht Club for drinks & tea. Quieter than the open Pub next to the Motel, which didn't seem to worry too much about social distancing

Sunday 19th July 8am we left on our tour to Whitehaven Beach on a sailing ship the Providence V [classic 62-foot gaff-rigged Schooner built from QLD timber]. We enjoyed a coffee & choc brownie for morning tea. Arrived at **Whitehaven Island** & got on a dingy to the shore line. Climbed up another lot of steps [Lyn complaining again] to the 3 lookouts over the water & beach with fantastic views . Just like the postcards & travel brochures you see. We than headed down to the beach for a walk along the sand & a walk in the water . **Whitehaven Beach.** It's Queensland's cleanest beach, and is washed by turquoise, green and blue water. It has been voted the world's top eco-friendly beach. It is seven kilometres of unbelievable white sand, which gives it a brilliant, near luminescent colour. It is the whitest sand you will find anywhere on earth. The sand on Whitehaven is composed of 98 per cent pure silica, hence it has a powder-like consistency, softer & a velvety feel and doesn't retain heat.

We got back on the Providence & enjoyed a healthy lunch of salad wraps & quiches [John's favourite] than headed near a reef for the ones who wanted to do some

snorkelling. Joyce was the only one to put her hand up for this experience (Well done Joyce.) Arrived back at the Marina 4.30pm after a wonderful day out . We all enjoyed a delicious seafood tea at the Fish D'vine & Rum Bar Restaurant to complete our time in the Whitsundays

Monday 20th July On our way to Gladstone following the coast line to stay for 1 night . Greg left us to go home to Brisbane. John hired a Mini van to have a quick drive around Gladstone. We all went out to tea at a Steak House where Roger caught up with his Sister June, brother in-law Linton & family who joined us. **Gladstone** is approximately 550 km by road north-west of the state capital, Brisbane, and 100 km south-east of Rockhampton. Situated between the Calliope and Boyne Rivers, Gladstone is home to Queensland's largest multi-commodity shipping port. The region is famous for fishing and boating.

Tuesday 21st July Arrived Bundaberg to refuel & go to the Jabriu Factory at the Airport. Jabriu was co-founded in 1988 by Rodney Stiff & Phil Ainsworth .Rodney has retired & his daughter Sue Woods is now the Business Manager. Rodney showed us around & answered the boys' questions. He still has an interest in the company. He came from the cane harvester industry, he was an engineer, and he retired from the company, and he always says the fishing is no good in Bundaberg, so he took up flying.

Bundaberg [385km north Brisbane] It's known for Bundaberg Rum and the Bundaberg Distillery offers museum tours and tastings. Bundaberg Botanic Gardens is home to the Hinkler Hall of Aviation, dedicated to solo long-distance pilot Bert Hinkler.

We quickly continued on to Goondiwindi for the night before the weather closed-in in Bundaberg..



Wednesday 22nd July Homeward bound , refuelling & lunch stop at Narromine. Roger ,Bill, Lyn & Joyce went through the Narromine Aviation Museum to see the replica of the Wright Brothers Flyer on display & aviation history in the area.

Our QLD trip took us over rivers, creeks, channels, pristine coast lines, farming land & the vastness of the QLD outback landscape . The boys refuelled most nights with a bottle of red or two which kept them alert for the next day of flying . Roger & Bill were very thankful to John & Steve who managed to fly a head of them to check out the airstrips, winds & air traffic .A very BIG THANKYOU THANKYOU to JOHN our Captain of Flying [we cant' thank him enough] with all the hours he spent organising our unforgettable trip away to QLD to embrace all that Australia has to offer.

Signing off:-) Lyn Turner