

AUSTRALIAN PIPER SOCIETY SILVER CITY FLYAWAY

28th October to 1st November 2016

27 Participants -- 12 Aircraft

Friday 28th October Broken Hill.

Local fog on the ground at Lilydale but seeping through, the sun won out and by 8am we were all loaded up and hurtling down the strip and into the blue skies. Hardly a



ripple for the flight over a very water logged Echuca, before landing into Broken Hill.

One other of our group had arrived earlier and was tied down for the next two nights. Time to pick up our people mover before checking in at the Silver Haven Motel. By this time a bite of lunch in town and a

catch up with a couple of others with food on their agenda also.

David was on call as driver and spent a busy afternoon picking up from the airfield and dropping off at the Motel. Dinner came as the dark crept in with eleven aircraft all bedded down. The Democratic Club provided 25 hearty meals to rather a noisy bunch of pilots and passengers all chattering well into the night.

Sat 29th October

The bright and sunny day began with a leisurely breakfast followed by a morning of getting to know the city centre of Broken Hill.

We chose as others did also, a walk through the "Pro Hart" gallery and museum, where we enjoyed browsing Pro's work, purchased gifts and learnt a little more about one of Australia's most iconic and enduring artists.

Broken Hill has many galleries, gift shops and coffee shops all of which others of our group filled in some retail therapy time.





Unfortunately Tim & Karl had to leave the group due to a call out from work. By midday we were all back at the motel and boarding a rather luxurious coach for a drive out to Silverton, and home of the “Mad Max” movie series. Lunch out back alfresco style at the Silverton Hotel gave us a

great excuse to break the low cholesterol diets with a reminder of what a real hamburger tasted like.



That was OK as after lunch we walked off any excess around the township of Silverton with its restored buildings and of course the “Mad Max” museum with many of the vehicles as used in the movies. A lovely old town and well worth the visit and a natter with its townsfolk.

Later we drove back to Broken Hill calling in at “The Sculptures” where 53 tonnes of sandstone was transported from Wilcannia area in 1993 and transformed the hill into an artwork of international standing by world renowned artists.



The twelve larger than life sculptures stand tall and take command, overlooking the so aptly named Living Desert Reserve. Back on the coach, back into Broken Hill for a quick cleansing ale at the Palace Hotel again an Aussie icon as is the hotel where “Priscilla Queen of the Desert” was filmed.

Dinner was back at the Silver Haven Motel allowing for our fellow flying group to drift back to their rooms throughout the evening and reflect on this area steeped in history.

Sunday 30th October White Cliffs.

Breakfast and checkout before a bus shuttle to the airstrip. Most had refuelled on arrival into Broken Hill two days earlier, leaving only checks etc. and it was not long before the 11 aircraft where flying the 107 NM north east to White Cliffs. A couple of



rain showers to dodge around did not stop the group and before long all aircraft were refuelled and safely tied down for the night at White Cliffs.

We stayed at the Underground Motel, a unique experience of living below the surface totally unaffected by the sometimes scorching weather above. The hotel was built into Poor Man's Hill so named for its lack of opals.

It wasn't long before we emerged from our



underground lodgings to join yet another underground experience of the Red Earth Opal Mine Tour.

Graham, our local guide has been mining most of his life but as he says he does it for the love and not the riches. A friendly and somewhat quirky fellow, he gave a talk on the history of the area and showed us through his small gift shop. We handled rocks with what looked to me just rocks but were indeed opal samples. Just as well I was not dependent on my opal mining skill to feed a family.

During our Opal Mine tour Graham explained the different rock seams some of which could and did lead to opals. Graham's son after a day's work elsewhere comes back home and goes down into the mine where he chips away seeking the illusive opal.



Their passion is evident as also outside a small boy is seen chipping away with tools at a bucket of rocks. The boy I later found out is Graham's grandson.

I may not have that passion but maybe others of our group have as towards the end of the tour and by now out of the mine and above ground we find a couple have been locked down in the mine. No panic all was rectified and released from their mole like existence. No names mentioned but I am sure one very lucky lady would not mind me telling you all that after the tour Jan came to dinner wearing a beautiful and newly acquired opal ring. Now I realise there is more than one way to come out of White Cliffs sporting an exquisite opal.



A tour of the sparse town and a drink at the local hotel gave late entertainment while others wandered about underground at the Motel exploring the small museum and the thirty odd accommodation rooms. A steep stairway gives access to the world above where

all that can be seen of the motel existence are ventilation shafts to each of the rooms below. This outlook above ground also provides a great spot to take photos of the spectacular sunsets and billions of stars.



Monday 31st October Mungo Lodge.



Getting cooler this morning and although we had had rain overnight we were welcomed into a clear morning. Sadly we said goodbye to Ian and Doug and later we were joined by Colin & Britta at Mungo. Again into skies for a flight south, 170 NM, and into Mungo National Park and Mungo Lodge.

Mungo Lodge has been refurbished approx. five years ago and now offers an oasis for all. The airstrip has crossed gravel runways, the longest is 1000 metres. Ample parking which is in easy walking access of the accommodation.



A buffet lunch in the main reception building followed by a short drive to the edge of the “Great Walls of China” An amazing 33 kilometre stretch of sand dunes and lunettes formed by centuries of sand storms.

Our indigenous tour guide walked us through the dunes stopping to explain the black marks and remains of ancient fireplaces. Fossilised ancient human footprints bring aboriginal history to life some dating back to about 20,000 BC and are the largest collection of their kind in the world.

With each wind storm the ever shifting sands reveal new and exciting sights and provide us and future visitors with an insight into this ancient world.

No organised archaeological exploration is necessary.

Our guide treated us to a couple of songs accompanied on his guitar as we sat high on the dunes. Apart from the music the solitude is breathtaking.



Later back at the lodge we enjoyed our final dinner where we thanked both David and Lorraine Law for arranging and taking us on an amazing five days into a spectacular part of Australia where NSW hugs the South Aust border.

Most of us had flown before into some and even all the places but each time there are many more unique and rewarding differences. I am sure we all have new stories to tell and wonderful new memories that are ours forever.

For me it is to be able to fly and see the truly magnificent and ever-changing landscape below. To experience the passionate characters out there just bursting to tell you of their lives and the history of their part of the land. Most of all to catch up with friends both new and old and to “chew the fat” as they say!



Tuesday 1st November

Departed Mungo Lodge after breakfast and farewells.

Our flight took us over areas still flooded, Mangalore and into Lilydale at approx. midday.

Thank you all for making it possible.
Till next time fly safe and be a proud and privileged member of the Aust Piper Society.

Irene Lawson



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