

Hi all QRAA Members,

TASMANIA Trip Feb – March 2018

A suggestion by Graham Hawthorne that QRAA should plan a trip to Tasmania led to much background work by Kelvin Hutchinson, Graham Hawthorne, Doug McCullough and Denise Quinn. Our thanks for many hours of meeting and planning.

Although a larger number of club members initially indicated their interest in taking part, but for various reasons, just five aircraft set off at the end of February- Kelvin Hutchinson in his Jabiru 230, Graham and Liz Hawthorne, Jabiru 230, John Reid and Louise Neal , Jabiru 230, Peter Bugg, Virus and Phil and Mary Goyne, Jabiru 430.

John and Louise brought their plane up from Lismore to Warwick a few days before departure and started their journey on February 16. The rest of us commenced the next day and met in Temora for the night.

Next we flew to Mount Beauty at the western side of the Snowy Mountains. The locals made us welcome and we walked around the town's lake for lunch. That afternoon we had an interesting trip over mountains and into valleys finally ending up at Latrobe Valley in Victoria, where we caught up with John and Louise.

We had planned to cross Bass Strait , leaving from Latrobe Valley on Monday February 19 but rain prevented this. The Latrobe Aero Club CFI gave us the loan of his club's car so we were able to arrange for the hire of a van. We were then able to explore the historic goldfields town of Walhalla in the hills surrounding Latrobe – a very interesting tour.

Weather cleared sufficiently to attempt the Bass Straight crossing the next day. Being a day late, we decided to cancel our Flinders Island stop and push on to Barnbogle on the Tasmanian mainland. The crossing was uneventful although a solid cloud cover meant most of us flying low (about 2500 ft). We were in touch with Melbourne Centre for the crossing, who held our overwater "Skeds" which required calling them at set times, usually about 20 minute intervals. The Centre thanked us on conclusion of the Skeds, probably because we were able to call "Operations Normal" which meant they had no work to do looking for us !

We were welcomed at Barnbogle by our club member and friend Owen Bartrop and a number of the Devonport aero club members. Owen is an ex RAAF pilot of the Sabre and Vampire jet era. He still flies and presently owns a Virus, similar to Peter's. Owen would be well known to many through his magazine articles on all aspects of flying. Graham had many conversations with Owen prior to the trip, as he had many suggestions for our stay in Tasmania. The Barnbogle golf club's van transported us to the club house, with its spectacular views, for brunch.

It was then on to Devonport where we tied down our planes, assisted by Owen, and left them to start our tour of Tasmania, in an Avis 10 seater van.

Peter was our van driver for the next 10 days. This was fortunate, as we soon learnt that he has a vast knowledge of Tasmania and the places to visit, having spent 55 years there prior to moving to the Gold Coast. We managed to fit in a lot of the touristy places to visit such as : Deloraine, West Tamar, Launceston Cataract George, Legerwood near Scottsdale, Georges Bay, St Helens, Binalong Bay, Bay of Fires, Wineglass Bay. Phil and Mary left the group at Koonya for a brief stay with Mary's uncle and aunt, which also gave them the opportunity to visit Port Arthur (the others had been there on another occasion). The rest of the group toured the Huon Valley and other areas. Phil and Mary joined them after being taken around various Hobart locations where Mary's parents and relatives used to live and where Phil spent his early years.

Our tour continued under Peter's guidance to the hydro-electric power station run by waters from Clark dam and Butler's George, Queenstown, Strahan and Macquarie Harbour. Next town was Stanley but on the way we paused for a while to watch the live streaming on an iphone of our friend John Doughton's funeral in Toowoomba. We visited Wynyard, Smithton and finally back to Devonport.

During our travels in the van, it was interesting that we were on roads of the Targa Tasmania car rally sections on which Graham and Liz competed during their Targa days before getting the flying "bug".

We were due to fly to King Island on March 1. However, weather stopped this so we used the day to visit Cradle Mountain. This meant that our planned stop on King Island was cancelled.

Up early on Friday March 2 and we departed Devonport flying west into cloudy, showery conditions until we cleared the mainland on the way back to the "big island" via King Island.

It was a long day flying from Devonport. Kelvin, Graham and Liz went to Narromine after a fuel stop at Bendigo. Phil and Mary chose to go to Warrnambool and Griffith then on to Narromine. Peter, John and Louise went on to Mudgee for their overnight stop. Kelvin, Phil and Mary tracked Moree then toward Warwick, whereas Graham and Liz tracked over Inverell toward Warwick. Cloud forced Phil and Mary, Graham and Liz to land at Inglewood. Kelvin pushed on and got into Warwick.

Kelvin, Denise and Mark Brandson drove out to Inglewood to pick up Graham, Liz, Mary and Phil, who went back to retrieve their planes later. Peter, John and Louise flew low up the coast to their respective home bases.

A very successful trip- food, wine and company was excellent. Thanks to all involved and we look forward to the next QRAA adventure to the North later in the year !

Cheers, Phil

