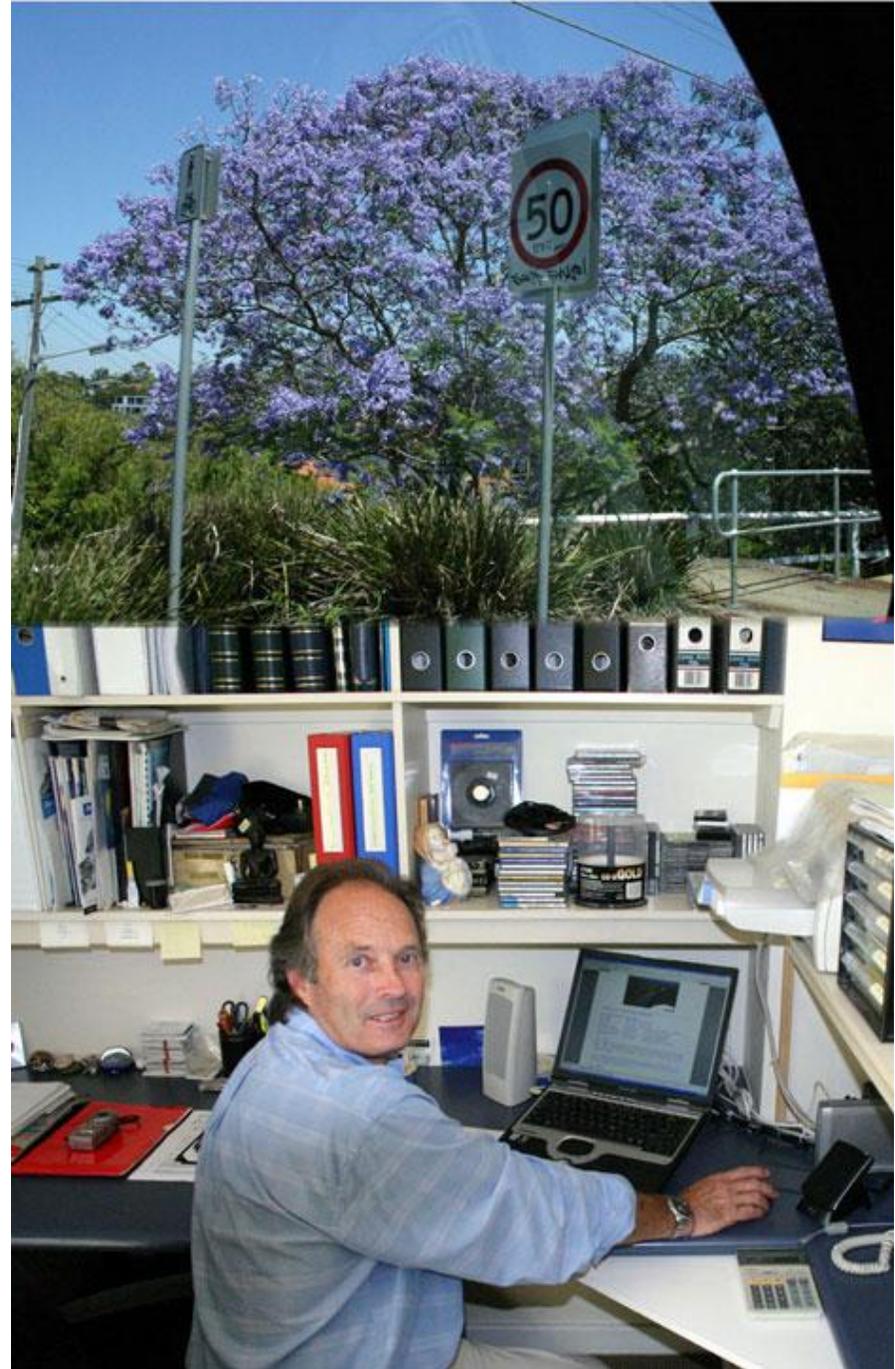


A Seaplane Gaggle Down Under (photos and comments by John Dunlop)

Arrival

After 26 hours in steerage, Rob Loneragen rescued me at Sydney Kingsford Smith International. I was greeted with a brilliant 35C spring day. Flowers in full bloom and everyone driving on the wrong side of the road. (Couldn't understand these road signs either so glad I didn't have to drive!)

November 18, 2004
Sydney



Condo

Rob delivered me into the capable hands of Brian Dehlsen and Suzanne at there Sydney condo. Hey folks, city living doesn't get any better than this!

November 18, 2004 -Sydney



Weekender

Brian and Suzanne's cottage and nearby motel are an hour and a half by car north of Sydney on Lake Munmorah, a salt water lake just a short drive from Australia's east coast. The hot weather, calm skies and tranquil waters were to be in short supply as we discovered during the next several days. Here Canadian friend, Hunter, joins Brian and Suzanne during the lull before the storm.

November 19 - Munmorah



Wash Down

Here Rob and Jack Peters wash the salt off their SeaReys after charging up the “seaplane ramp” that Brian, Hunter and I had constructed the day before. The new arrivals improved substantially on our efforts but we still managed to get a couple of Lake Buccaneers stuck in the mud during our operations at Lake Munmorah.

November 20, 2004 - Munmorah



Brian Suzanne & Rob

The meticulous preparations and logistical oversight by unflappable Rob Loneragen ensured that the Australian gaggle ran smoothly without any serious incidents during the 4 day seaplane fly-in. Suzanne and Brian hosted operations out of Munmorah with breakfasts for a throng, shuttles between their cottage, motel and nearby Warnervale airport. The side trips to Rathmines and Palm Beach used Munmorah as an overnight base Saturday, Sunday. Despite all the stress placed on these three, they still found time to make me feel at home and a seat in an aircraft for all flight ops.

November 20, 2004 - Munmorah



John Daley & Kerry

John Daley and his friend Kerry cheerfully offered me the right seat in their Lake Buccaneer for the four days. John normally handles a Qantas 747 but I'm sure he learned something more about heavy takeoffs when my 240 lbs stepped aboard! These two really looked after my butt. Really a couple of good friends!

November 23,
2004
Southbound



Lake Eater!

John Daley's Lake Buccaneer has an airbrush paint scheme to rival any I've seen. Here she's parked on the wide apron at Rathmines, a wartime Catalina base.

November 20, 2004 - Rathmines



Friends

Many new arrivals appeared at Rathmines including (below) the venerable Kevin Dennes seen here with camera speaking to John Daley and Ted Muckton.

Perry and Viv Taylor (above) arrived from Noosa in Queensland in their gorgeous Seawind. Here they converse with Brian Dehlsen as Rhys (in yellow) and Mandy Richards (in white) look on. Mandy and Rhys flew a Lake Renegade.

November 20, 2004 - Rathmines



Rides

As Phil Dulhunty watches, another passenger is assisted aboard his 180 on floats.

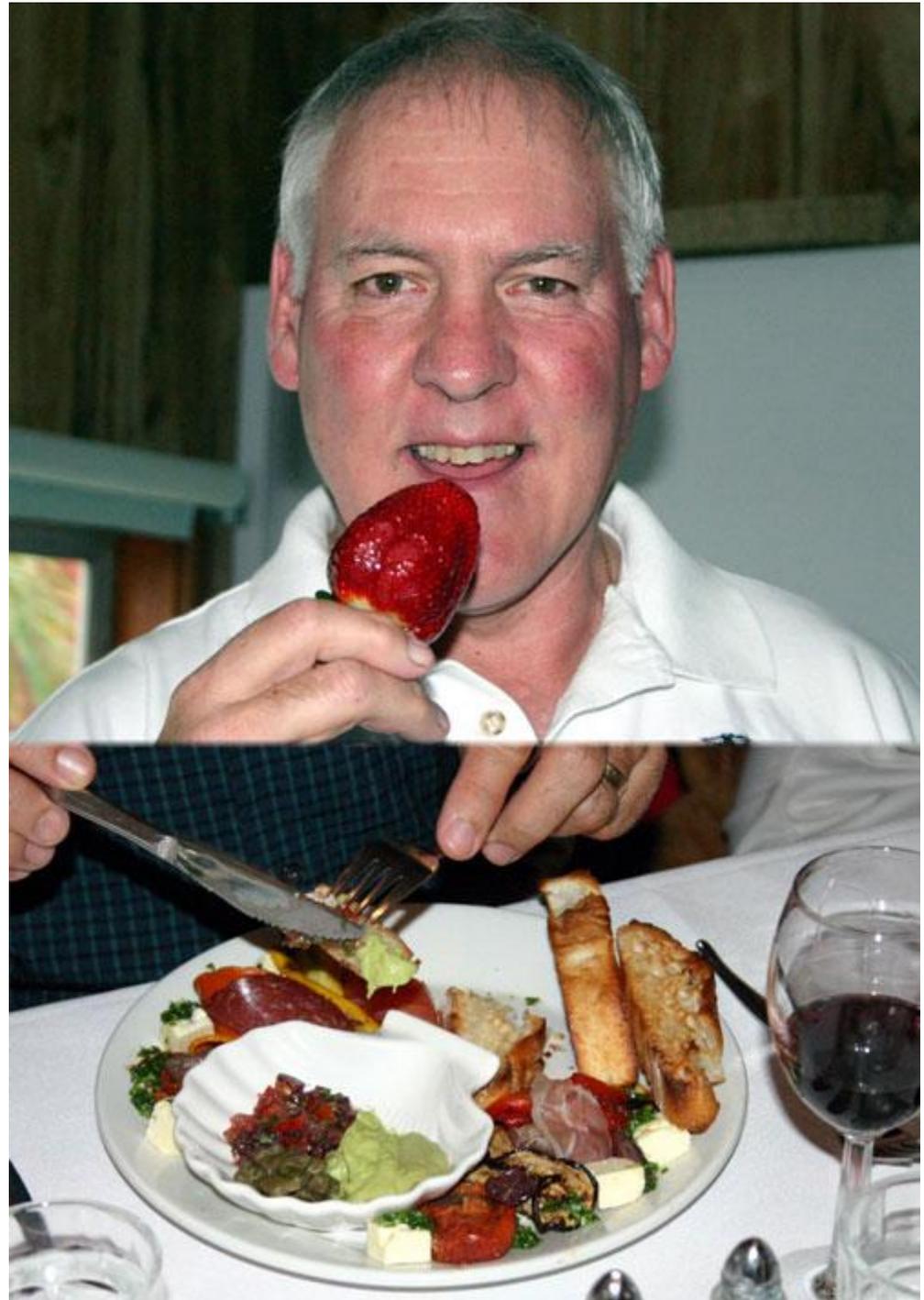
November 20, 2004 - Rathmines



Eats!

Food Down Under style! I just about choked on one of Suzie's strawberries!
Think I put on 5 pounds in four days..

November 20, 2004 - Munmorah



Munmorah Group

Quite a group of new friends! Despite weather that did not always contribute to the fun, we had a great time with such a diverse group of seaplanes. Thanks mates!

November 21, 2004 - Munmorah



VH-JIB Heads For Home

Grant Farrow was only able to stay one day but his beautiful little Rans amphib impressed us all. Rotax powered, she is quieter and cruises faster than a SeaRey. Here Grant shows us a pretty lively takeoff too.

What are the chances that his registration VH-JIB was the same as mine? (C-GJIB)

November 21, 2004 - Munmorah



Study In Contrast

The Rans and Seawind provide an interesting contrast in form. Both aircraft were beautifully completed and well suited to their unique niche.

November 21, 2004 - Munmorah



Four Reys

Watching the four SeaReys arrive at Palm Beach brought shivers!

Rob Loneragen, Jack Peters, Jim Moline and Ted Munckton may have been the last to arrive but they put on quite a show!

November 21,
2004 - Palm
Beach



Jack & Hunter

Jack Peters with Hunter have just arrived at Palm Beach in VH-YES. “Jolly Roger.”

The “Patrol” on the side legitimizes Australian SeaReys as part of the “Customs Watch” program of coastal surveillance. Now there’s an excuse for low flying!

November 21, 2004 - Palm Beach



Palm Beach

A variety of new types arrived at Palm Beach including this Beaver. The Australian Seaplane Association hosted a lunch here as they did in Rathmines. Here again, many locals came out to see the sea birds come and go. Several of were treated to flights in the Beaver and Jack Peters let me reduce his life expectancy somewhat in VH-YES!

November 21, 2004 - Palm Beach



Palm Beach Lunch

Many including John Daley chose to anchor near shore in the tidal flow. Overcast skies and a regatta didn't stop most of the SeaReys from frolicking. This Cessna skipper found a great place to enjoy his lunch while watching activities.

November 21, 2004 - Palm Beach



Sydney

After Palm Beach, John and Kerry flew me south to Sydney Harbour. The dreary weather could not take anything away from the beauty of this city.

November 21, 2004 - Sydney



Seawind

Back at Munmorah the Seawind pays a visit as Rob continues his frolicking. I enjoyed my brief flight in the Seawind thank you Perry! Smooth and very comfortable in the air (hey, note the DVD screen!), it seems most at home in light chop and large lakes when on the water. This aircraft did not seem to use much more runway than the Lake for Takeoff. And in one memorable case, the Lake took considerably more water to get airborne with JD aboard! (We also had some water in the bilge.)

November 21, 2004 - Munmorah



Frothy Coffee

So we headed north to Camden Haven on Monday the 22nd, stopping at “Frothy Coffee” for a Cappuccino before hopping over the hill to a Wallis Lake for lunch. You need to consult an Aussie about packing a beach with aircraft. Awesome! I’ll leave the lunch fiasco to others to explain. Now I know how the ladies enjoy their mud packs. Damned near drowned!

November 22, 2004 - Smiths Lake



Camden Haven

What a delightful place this private field was! The Lakes and SeaReys were segregated in their own groups for the night. The bachelors bunked in these small cabins while the couples headed into town.

November 22, 2004 - Camden Haven



Action!

Shortly after the Lakes arrived, Perry and Viv took to their flashy steed and launched for Queensland. We really enjoyed their company. In fact, the many seaplane types present and the raucous evenings proved that everyone can have fun at one of these gaggles.

Camden Haven has the smoothest grass strip that I have ever experienced.

November 22, 2004 - Camden Haven



Flora & Fauna

My camera was stuck in an under exposure mode for several days. Overcast skies didn't help much but the unique Flora and Fauna down under were captured reasonably well.

This is a Jewel Tree. The bird is a “rob your cabin bird.”

November 22, 2004 - Camden Haven



Aussie Flora

Jewel tree flowers,
Pitcher Plant, Garlic and
Gardenia (clockwise.)
Now why can't I take
aircraft photos like this?!!

November 22, 2004 -
Camden Haven



Landings

Finally the SeaReys arrive at Camden Haven.
The landings were all unique and “interesting.”
Hey guys, I got the rest of the footage if you want to see it!

November 22, 2004 - Camden Haven



Camden Haven 2

Morning dawned misty and it was time to head for home. It was sad to leave such an idyllic place. Where had the week gone? Although the bottom photo shows the SeaReys arriving, both scenes I think show the tranquility of this spot.

November 23, 2004 - Camden Haven



High Speed

Rob got airborne with Brian then circled back as I hastened to the runway, my camera ready in the nick of time. Perhaps not a Seawind but pretty slick just the same!

November 23, 2004 - Camden Haven



Rugged Scenery

The east coast north of Sydney has a rugged beauty. I shot these photos from John Daley's VH-ETY as we headed back south to Warnervale airport. The end of a fabulous week!
Thank you John and Kerry!

November 23, 2004 - East Coast, NSW



Goodbye

The SeaKey gang is safely back at Warnervale near Munmorah. Ted and Jack will head on south to Wallaga Lake and Melbourne while Jim and Rob head back to Bankstown near Sydney. I will drive back to Sydney with Brian and have one last dinner out with friends Brian, Suzanne and Rob before catching the Air Canada flight north.

I decided on the late spur of the moment to join this gang down under. I hope these photos help all of us seize such moments. Life is short mate..

November 23, 2004 -
Warnervale Airport

