



# FEBRUARY 2011 NEWSLETTER

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## From Where I Sit

As we reflect on the past year and now commence our planning for the coming year, we have had our worst natural disasters in living memory for most. I hope all of our members have come through this time unscathed or with minimum disruption or damage. Those of us that would have liked to get away have found the weather dictating where or when we could use our aircraft to avoid troughs, thunderstorms, and more recently cyclones that have impacted North Queensland. We have just had for the fourth time water flowing through our hangar at Lilydale Airfield.



In another couple of weeks is the bi-annual Avalon 2011. We have decided to have a presence this year with at least three members displaying their aircraft, so please drop in to say good day. We do have most members of the committee on hand as well as a few members to man the stand over the three days of the public display days. If you require more information please contact Faye Warren who is organising our display and liaising with the Avalon 2011 committee. We will be in area B5 with the Bonanza Society so do call round to see us.

Barry McCabe is well under way with planning for our next major fly away to Northern Australia. He has a number of members who have already registered, so to avoid any disappointment I would suggest you register your interest now. This trip starts at Longreach and goes through Mount Isa, Adels Grove, Groote Eylandt, Coinda, Darwin, Katherine and Tennant Creek. Barry has many activities that should be of interest to everyone. For more details please check our web site [www.piper.org.au](http://www.piper.org.au)

I would like to extend a warm welcome to new member Julian Barson who flies from Moorabbin airport. We hope to see you at one of our future events.

Alan Gordon has in this issue details of the planned fly in to Scone for the June long week end. I hope that we see a great turn up to enjoy this picturesque town in NSW

### Scone

Attractive town in the heart of horse breeding country

Scone is a pleasant rural centre of wide, tree-lined streets situated within the Hunter Valley, 283 km north of Sydney and 26 km north of Muswellbrook. It is 202 metres above sea-level and has a population of approximately 4000.

The commercial and administrative centre of a pastoral, agricultural and dairying shire Scone is an important stock-selling centre noted for its horse and cattle studs. It is known as 'The Horse Capital of Australia' and claims to be the second-largest horse breeding area in the world, after Kentucky in the United States. The equine focus of the town is reflected in numerous ways: the ten-day Scone Horse Festival in May when there are street parades, a rodeo, stock sales, an airshow, race meetings and entertainment

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# Spark Plug Care

Courtesy of CASA

*AWB 20-1 Issue 1, 24 September 2001  
Spark Plug Care*

## Applicability

All piston engine aircraft.

## Purpose

The objective of this bulletin is to highlight to personnel involved in engine maintenance the importance of careful inspection of spark plugs to ensure trouble free operation.

Correct maintenance of spark plugs is imperative for reliable operation of any engine. This AWB is to remind maintainers the important aspects of spark plug maintenance, from selection of the correct spark plug through to cleaning and installation techniques. At all times personnel should consult the Instructions for Continuing Airworthiness (ICA) pertaining to the aircraft, engine or spark plug.

## Background

There have been several engine failures that have been attributed to internal breakdown of the ceramic nose core insulator and electrodes of spark plugs. Evidence suggests that many of these failures occurred because of poor cleaning, testing, inspection and handling techniques of spark plugs.

## Recommendations

### Selection

Spark plugs come in many different thread sizes and lengths, heat ranges, electrode types and shielding styles. It is important when selecting a spark plug to choose the correct spark plug for the operating conditions of the aircraft. The Type Certificate Data for the engine lists all the spark plugs that are approved for the engine. It is important to select spark plugs of all the same part number for installation for efficient engine operation.

Currently most spark plug manufacturers do not approve reconditioning of their spark plugs. Most spark plugs are manufactured in such a manner that none of the critical parts can be replaced without destroying the spark plugs integrity.

## Cleaning

After removal spark plugs should be degreased using methylethylketone (MEK) or similar. After drying with clean, dry shop air, the spark plugs should be given a preliminary inspection to eliminate those that are obviously unfit for further servicing.

If the spark plug has heavy lead deposits the use of a vibrating cleaner is advised. A common workshop practice is to use either a pick or ground hacksaw blade to loosen lead deposits. This practice should be used with caution since it increases the risk of damaging the ceramic nose core insulator rendering the spark plug unserviceable.

After removal of lead deposits the spark plug should be lightly cleaned with an abrasive compound. Severe abrasive cleaning will erode the electrodes causing premature wear. Always use glass beads, aluminium oxide or similar as an abrasive compound. Silica sand should never be used as an abrasive agent. During the blasting process personnel should wear suitable dust mask to prevent inhalation of abrasive dust.

Either a wire hand brush or a power-driven brush (maximum of 0.005" wire size) can be used to clean the threads on both the shell and the shielding barrel.

NOTE: never wire brush the insulator or the electrodes.

## Gapping

The tools and methods used to set spark plug gaps vary greatly. The main precaution is to avoid putting any pressure on the centre electrode, which could in turn crack the ceramic insulator. The gap should be measured by a round wire gauges and gap adjustment is on the ground electrode only. When adjusting spark plug gaps never place the wire gauge between the electrodes during adjustment, as this will place a side load on the centre electrode and crack the ceramic insulator. If the gap is inadvertently set too close no attempt should be made to widen the gap, since this also could damage the ceramic insulator or electrodes.



## Spark Plug Care continued

Throughout the gapping process for massive-electrode spark plugs every effort should be made to ensure that the side of the electrodes are parallel to each other. This will prevent accelerated wear of the electrodes leading to increased gap dimensions.

After gapping, the electrode should be inspected for wear limits. Many spark plug manufacturers have erosion gauges that act as GO/NO GO gauges to measure wear. However the general rule for spark plugs is to replace them when the electrodes are half it's original dimension.

If during any stage of servicing a spark plug is dropped, it should be scrapped immediately. Many flaws may not be apparent visually or during any stage of the inspection or testing process but could cause failure of the spark plug during operational service.



### Inspection and Testing

Inspection should be accomplished with the aid of a magnifying glass (10X or better) in an area with good lighting. The inspection areas are the threads (both the shell and shielding barrel), electrodes, ceramic insulators, shell hex and connector seat. Any spark plug showing signs of deformity, insulator cracking or chipping, excessive electrode erosion, thread damage or any sign of misuse should be discarded. Cavities within the spark plug should be checked for cleanliness and contain no residual abrasive compound or cleaning solvent.

The spark plug should be tested in accordance with instructions of the test unit used. Test units usually require clean, dry shop air supplied at 80-125 psi and are connected to mains power. With both regulated air pressure (appropriate to the gap dimension) and high voltage applied to the spark plug, a consistent spark should be seen through the viewing port. Failure to observe a bright consistent spark means the spark plug is unserviceable and requires replacement.

### Removal and Installation

Carefully remove the ignition harness connector, avoiding damage to the wire, terminal sleeve or the barrel insulator. It is generally suggested to

use a 6-point socket for spark plug removal and installation, as it provides a greater bearing surface than a 12-point socket.

Prior to installing spark plugs an approved anti-seize compound should be applied to the firing end threads. It should not, however, be applied to the first two threads to prevent the risk of misfiring of the electrodes. Never apply anti-seize to the terminal threads of the shielding barrel.

Most modern spark plugs have a solid copper gasket that requires annealing prior to spark plug installation to ensure a tight, gas sealed fit. The maintainer should check that the spark plug has only one washer, is of correct dimensions and is annealed. If the engine is equipped with a thermocouple probe in the form of a spark plug gasket, a normal gasket is not required.

To equalise electrode wear of spark plugs installed in engines with an even number of cylinders due to constant polarity timing, it is recommended that spark plugs be rotated and not be installed in the same cylinder. Generally spark plugs from even numbered cylinders should be installed in odd numbered cylinders and conversely for spark plugs from removed from odd numbered cylinders should be installed into even numbered cylinders.

The spark plug should then be screwed into the cylinder by hand up to the gasket. If the spark plug fouls while screwing into the cylinder there is probably carbon or lead deposits on the threads. Use an appropriate thread cleaning tool to ensure removal of deposits. Cleaning thread inserts (helicoils) with a tap is not recommended as permanent damage to the insert may result.

After torquing the spark plug to the appropriate setting, the ignition harness connector can be installed. Care must be observed not to over torque ignition connector, as severe damage to the harness attaching hardware will occur. Many manufacturers recommend the connector be clean and dry, without the use of a lubricant. However, referral to maintenance data may list a lubricant approved for use in that application.

## Fly in to Scone

Friday June 10th -  
Monday June 13th

ACCOMMODATION: AIRLIE HOUSE  
MOTOR LODGE SCONE

(This is an excerpt from an email to me about accomm and meals)

Accommodation is at Airlie House - Daniel, Wes or Tracey (02) 6545 1488

- \$95 for one person in a queen room
- \$105 for two people in a queen or twin room
- \$140 in a Guest House Room (2 available)

Our new menu starts in March and will be able to forward this on closer to time.

We will be able to offer your group a three course meal for \$48pp.

Breakfast is also available if required.

Transport (0409 364005) will be available from Friday through to Monday 10th to 13th June 2011.

Friday evening 10th June 2011 - (for the early starters)

EITHER

- Attend Scone Aero Club house for drinks and or dinner

OR

- Attend local RSL Club (newly renovated and is extremely nice) for a great Chinese dinner and drinks. Aerial of Scone

Saturday 11th June 2011

Fly into Scone and call Al Gordon 0409 364 005 for transport into town approx.. 4 kms

- 1000 hours

Take a relaxing walk down town to check out the lovely boutique shops and a couple of coffee houses.

- 1230 hours

We board the bus and head to the Linga Longa pub at Gundy which is a little town about 15kms east of Scone ... the pub is nestled at the foot of the Barrington mountains and we can have lunch on the lawns or in the pub.



- 1500 hours

Leave the pub and check out the horse stud farms on the way to Glenbawn Dam then back to town

- 1700 hours

Bus will deliver back to Airlie house

- 1900 hours

Dinner at Airlie House - we'll have a speaker and we will have entertainment so if anyone would like to sing or play geetar be ready !!

Sunday 12th June 2010

- 1000 hours

A guided tour through the legendary Col Pay's hangar to look at his war birds and other aircraft including his firefighting planes.

- 1200 hours

Visit the wineries throughout the Hunter .... Lunch will be had at various stops on the way.

- 1700 hours

Back to motel to freshen up

- 1900 hours wander around to Scone RSL (400 metres) for a superb Chinese meal

Monday 13th June 2011

- 0800 and onwards - transport to Scone airport.

General Information:

- Airlie House is a beautiful old heritage type building so check it out on the web by googling airlie house Scone NSW
- The weather in Scone in generally good in June and great smooth flying. If there is a fog it's generally lifted and gone by 0900 - 1000 hours.

Contact Alan Gordon 0409 364 005 or email [alan@transcare.org.au](mailto:alan@transcare.org.au)

*Book early to avoid disappointment*





# Aircraft Oils and Lubricants

Technical Terms used in Aircraft Oils and Lubricants.

**Additives:**

Any compound added to oil for the purpose of improving certain properties of the oil.

**Approved Aviation Oil:**

Approved Aviation Oil is any brand name oil produced under the following specifications:

**Mineral Grades – SAE J1966 or MIL-L-6082 (obsolete) –** This SAE Standard establishes the requirements for non-dispersant, mineral lubricating oils to be used in four-stroke cycle piston aircraft engines. Users should consult their airframe or engine manufacturer's manuals for the latest listing of acceptable lubricants.

**Ashless Dispersant Grades – SAE J1899 or MIL-L-22851 (obsolete) –** This SAE Standard establishes the requirements for lubrication oils containing ashless dispersant additives to be used in four stroke cycle, reciprocating piston aircraft engines. Users should consult their airframe or engine manufacturer's manuals for the latest listing of acceptable lubricants.

*CAUTION: Some approved oils contain anti-scuffing additives that should NOT be used during engine break-in. Always refer to the label to ensure that the oil is correct for your application.*

**Ashless:**

When burned, does not form a metallic ash, which could be a source of pre-ignition.

**Ashless Dispersant (AD):**

A cleanliness additive for engine oils and widely used in aviation piston engines. Ashless dispersants do not contain metallic compounds and have no adverse effect on the break-in process. (See also "Dispersant")

**Boundary Lubrication:**

A condition which occurs when the two surfaces are not completely separated by the lubricant. Boundary lubrication often requires the use of EP additives.

**Detergent:**

A cleanliness additive made of metallic compounds to protect from sludge and varnish build-ups. Detergents are not allowed in aviation piston engine oils qualified under SAE J-1899 (obsolete MIL-L-22851) or SAE J-1966 (obsolete MIL-L-6082).

Note: No current aviation engine oil meeting the SAE J-1899 specification contains detergent compounds.

**Dispersant:**

An ashless engine oil additive that helps prevent sludge, varnish and other engine deposits by breaking up insoluble contaminant particles. These microscopic particles are kept suspended (or "dispersed") in the oil so they can be carried to the oil filter or until the oil is drained when no filter is installed.

**Hydrodynamic Lubrication:**

A system of lubrication in which the shapes and relative motion of the sliding surfaces cause the formation of a full fluid film that has enough pressure to separate the surfaces.

**Micron ( $\mu\text{m}$ ):**

A unit of measure =  $4 \times 10^{-5}$  inches. (or 1 millionth of a meter). It is used to measure oil film thickness and is also useful in specifying oil filter capabilities.

**Mineral Oil:**

Lubricating base oil distilled from crude oil; also a term used to distinguish it from synthetic base oils. In aviation circles, this typically refers to un-additized oil often used to break-in new or newly rebuilt piston engines

**SAE Grade:**

System used by engine manufacturers to define the lubricating oil viscosity requirements for their engines.

**Multiviscosity:**

Engine oil that meets the requirements of more than one SAE viscosity grade classification by passing tests at both high and low temperatures. Viscosity Index (VI) improvers are employed and the designation "W" indicates winter grade.

Note: Multiviscosity aviation piston engine oils have the advantage of quicker pumping at start-up, faster flow to the upper valve train, reduced strain on the battery and starter, and a thicker oil film at high temperatures versus straight grades.

**SAE Grade:**

System used by engine manufacturers to define the lubricating oil viscosity requirements for their engines.

**Scuffing:**

Severe adhesive wear resulting from metal transferring from one surface to a mating surface due to solid phase welding or abrasive effects between sliding surfaces.

**Sludge:**

A coagulated mass, often containing foreign matter, formed at low temperature in piston engines from oil oxidation residues, carbon and water.

**Synthetic Oil:**

Lubricating fluid made by chemically reacting materials of a specific chemical composition to produce a compound with planned and predictable properties.

Note: Full synthetics have been unsuccessful in aviation piston engines due to incompatibility with leaded fuel. Synthetic blends are sometimes used. However, we have not found these to be of similar added value (cost vs. performance) in aviation piston engines as they are in automotive or heavy duty trucking applications.

**TCP:**

Tricresyl Phosphate or Triphenyl Phosphate. An oil additive which acts as an anti-scuff agent in a lubricant or a lead-scavenger when used as a fuel additive. This property in a lubricant is called for with specific Lycoming engines which require the use of LW-16702. (See also "Scuffing")

**VI Improver:**

Viscosity Index Improvers are chemical polymers which expand with increasing temperature to counteract oil thinning. The higher the Viscosity Index, the smaller the relative change in viscosity with temperature.

**Viscosity:**

Measure of liquid resistance to flow at a specific temperature.

**W (e.g. 20W-50):**

Grade numbers followed by the letter "W" (i.e. 5W-, 10W-, etc.) identify oils suitable for winter service. Viscosities for those oils are determined at various cold temperatures on a laboratory Cold Cranking Simulator (CCS) and Mini Rotary Viscometer (MRV). Numbers without the W (i.e. 50, 60, etc.) identify oils which are tested at high temperature only. (See also "Multiviscosity")



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## **GULF & NT FLYAWAY 2011**

### **Longreach, Mt Isa, Adels Grove, Groote**

### **Eylandt, Cooinda, Darwin, Katherine, Tennant Creek.**

### **Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> July to Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> July 2011**

- **Saturday 16/7 Longreach**

- Arrive in Longreach by Saturday afternoon. For those who would like to have a good look around Longreach your arrival could be planned for a day or two earlier. Longreach has lots to see. The Stockmans Hall of Fame, Qantas Founders Museum etc. Accommodation is at the Jumbuck Motel (07 4658 1799) which is within walking distance of the above attractions and the Airport. We plan to meet the other flyaway members over dinner on the MV Explorer as we travel down the Thompson.

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- **Sunday 17/7 Mt Isa**

Flight time to Mt Isa should be about 2.5 hours which after refueling will give plenty of free time to visit Mt Isa's main tourist attraction, Outback at Isa, which is within walking distance of our accommodation. We are booked at the Verona All Seasons Hotel located in the center of town. Dinner will be at the Buffs Club.

- **Monday 18/7 Adels Grove**

- It will take a bit over an hour to fly to Adels Grove for our overnight stop. After refueling and lunch a two hour tour of Lawn Hill Gorge has been arranged. Canoes are available as part of the tour if required.

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- **Tuesday 19/7 & Wednesday 20/7 Groote Eylandt**

- The flight to Groote Eylandt is about 3 hours with fuel available at Borroloola on the way up if required. Fuel is also available at Groote. We are staying at the Dugong Beach Resort. Fishing is a big activity here for anyone interested. We can arrange for our catch to be cooked at the resort. There are several indigenous cultural experiences here also, but bookings will not be available until next year.

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- **Thursday 21/7 & Friday 22/7 Cooinda (Kakadu National Park)**

- It is about 2 hours from Groote to Cooinda. No fuel is available at Cooinda but is available at Jabiru if required for the 1 hour flight to Darwin. Our accommodation is at Gagudju Lodge at Cooinda. Again firm bookings for activities here cannot be made until next year, but the possibilities are a full day tour to Jim Jim falls, Animal Tracks tour with indigenous guides explaining bush tucker and medicines, and of course an early morning Yellow River Cruise.



- **Saturday 23/7, Sunday 24/7, Monday 25/7 Darwin**
- Flight time will be about an hour to Darwin from Cooina. After refueling and checking into our accommodation at Travelodge Mirambeena Resort in the center of Darwin it is planned to have the afternoon free. Sunday will be an early start for a full day trip to Litchfield National Park. We will be dropped off on our return to the famous Mindel Markets where we can have a casual dinner. Monday will be a chance for everyone to do their own thing in and around Darwin.
- **Tuesday 26/7, Wednesday 27/7 Katherine**
- It will take about 1.5 hours to get to Katherine (Tindal). We will have a camp fire meal to-night using some traditional bush foods and ingredients. Wednesday morning we will have a cruise of Katherine Gorge. We are staying at the Paraway Motel which advertises a stone grill which maybe interesting for Wednesday night.
- **Thursday 28/7 Tennant Creek**
- It will take almost 3 hours to reach Tennant Creek from Katherine. We are booked at the El Dorado Motel. There is quite a bit of history in Tennant Creek. We will have time to have a good look around before our farewell dinner where we will be entertained with some bush poetry.
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We now have six pilots and aircraft indicating an interest in the flyaway with somewhere between 12 and 15 participants. This flyer has quite a bit more detail which I am adding to as bookings for activities can be confirmed by the operators. I will be difficult to contact in the latter part of January so it would be good to get some more expressions of interest before then. I will send out actual registration forms soon, but I would like to receive any indications of interest as soon as possible.

We have 20 double or twin rooms booked at all stops, but as this is the peak season there is a need for firm numbers by early next year.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Contact me for a "Registration Form," members already indicating an interest will be sent a registration form soon.

Barry McCabe





## Airworthiness Bulletins Piper Corrosion Inspections

Courtesy of AOPA (America)

By Dan Namowitz

The FAA has issued five special airworthiness information bulletins (SAIBs) to address potential corrosion problems on a variety of Piper aircraft.



Each SAIB highlighted specific problem areas on the Pipers, but all the bulletins urged owners and operators to "increase their focus on inspections" provided in the aircraft service manuals.

The new SAIBs address the following Piper aircraft corrosion risks:

- PA-28, PA-32, PA-34, and PA-44 models: potential corrosion on the flap hinge and flap ribs.
- PA-28, PA-32 and PA-34 models: potential corrosion on the aileron at the hinge fitting.
- PA-28, PA-32, PA-34, and PA-44 models: potential corrosion on the wing rear spar at the fuselage attach fitting.

- PA-32 and PA-34 models: potential corrosion on the wing front spar at the fuselage attach fitting, at the landing gear attach point, and behind the leading edge fuel tank.
- PA-28, PA-32, and PA-34 models: potential corrosion on the vertical stabilizer forward attach point.

The average aircraft in the general aviation fleet is 30 years old—but age alone does not tell the story of an aircraft's susceptibility to corrosion or other problems. Each aircraft's condition depends on numerous factors including how it is used, stored, and maintained.

The Air Safety Institute offers an Aging Aircraft interactive course that reviews maintenance and ownership strategies for keeping older aircraft flying, shows examples of problems such as different kinds of corrosion and metal fatigue, and discusses the general effects of aging on aircraft. Significant input from the FAA's Small Airplane Directorate and industry type clubs was used to develop several manufacturer-specific tracks for most common makes of aircraft.

SAIBs are not mandatory, but are issued by the FAA in response to reported service data, and offer valuable guidance on aircraft care to owners and operators.

## House Members Urge Obama: No Aviation User Fees

One hundred and sixteen members of the U.S. House of Representatives have signed a letter to President Barack Obama urging him not to support aviation user fees as a means to fund the FAA's budget for 2012. User fees would be "a step backward" in efforts to modernize the air traffic control system, and would have a "detrimental impact on general aviation and the flying public," the letter states. Ed Bolen, president of the National Business Aviation Association, welcomed the effort. "We thank the Congressional leaders who took this action early in the year to reinforce a clear message of opposition to user fees, and welcome their unwavering support on this issue of critical importance to the entire general aviation community," Bolen said this week. NBAA said the current system of fuel taxes is proven and efficient.

The bipartisan effort was led by Rep. Tom Petri, R-Wis., chairman of the House aviation subcommittee, and Rep. Jerry Costello, D-Ill., ranking member of the subcommittee. "Their stance demonstrates how well they understand the role and value of general aviation, and all of us in the GA community appreciate their willingness to step forward and address this issue head on," said AOPA President Craig Fuller. "They have stood firm and told the Obama Administration that user fees would be bad for general aviation, for our national transportation system, and for the broader economy." A similar letter circulated in 2009 gathered 118 signatures. AOPA said it was "impressive" that the current letter attracted nearly as many supporters, given the significant changes in House membership since the recent election.



## Aircraft For Sale



PIPER PA 28 - 235 CHEROKEE -  
CONSTANT SPEED PROPELLER

1964 MODEL TTIS: 4550 HRS.  
ENGINE: 1644 HTR  
PROPELLER: 2000 HTR  
PAINTWORK AND INTERIOR: 8/10  
ALWAYS COUNTRY AIRCRAFT  
ALWAYS HANGARED BY CURRENT OWNER  
MAINTENANCE RELEASE VALID TO DECEMBER 2011  
FEATURES TWO PLACE BUILT-IN INTERCOM  
DIGITAL EGT

AVIONICS:  
GARMIN GNC 300XL  
KING KX 170 C  
KING KR 85  
ICOM IC - A 200  
KING KT 76 A  
RANGER U4 740

\$102,500-00. NO GST  
PH: 07 41621461

## The Story of Poncho Barnes

Born into a wealthy Californian family on July 22 1901, Florence Lowe grew up greatly influenced by her Grandfather Thaddeus Lowe known as the Father of the US Air Force. The strong personality and curiosity of aviation from her grandfather left Florence with a fearless attitude and desire to become a pilot, even though at the time only a handful of women were involved in aviation.

Florence married the Reverend Rankin Barnes, but the peaceful life of a clergyman's wife was not for Florence. After her mother's death in 1924 she inherited the family fortune and hence yearned for a more exciting life. She abandoned her family, and stowed away on a freighter bound for Mexico.

Florence spent four months abroad travelling living a high society life, and it was from there she emerged with the nickname of Poncho.

Poncho obtained her license in 1928 and her passion for aviation took off, running a barnstorming show and competing in air races.

Despite an air crash in the 1929 Women's Air Derby, Poncho returned in 1930 under the sponsorship of the Union Oil Company to win the race and break Amelia Earhart's world women's speed record with a speed of 196.19mph. Barnes broke this record in a Travel Air Type R Mystery Ship.

After her contract with Union Oil expired, Poncho moved to Hollywood to work as a stunt pilot for movies. In 1931 she started the Association Motion Picture Pilots, a union of film industry stunt fliers who promoted flying safety and standardized pay for aerial stunt work. She flew in several air adventure movies of the 1930's including Howard Hughes "Hell's Angels"

The Great Depression put a damper on Poncho's flying career and lifestyle. In 1935 she ended up in the Mojave Desert near an Army Air Corps bombing range called Muroc. During WW11 Muroc (later Edwards AFB) became an important aircraft proving ground. Poncho's ranch "The Happy Bottom Riding Ranch" became the social centre of the place. The club served as a place where test pilots could unwind as Barnes understood only too well the pressures faced by test pilots.

Poncho became close friends with test pilots Chuck Yeager, Jimmy Doolittle and Buzz Aldrin among others.. Poncho's ranch was famous for the parties and high flying lifestyle, however in 1952 a change in Command contributed to a conflict with the Air Force who evicted her from her property.

After her ranch was destroyed by fire Poncho filed a law suit against the United States Air Force for having been evicted from her property on the AFB. The court found in her favour and she again became a commonplace figure at the base.

Poncho Barnes died in April 1975. Son Bill Barnes died piloting a P-51 Mustang flying near Fox Field in Lancaster in October 1980 in 1940. Poncho founded Barnes Aviation of Lancaster which Bill operated in his adult years, and remains in the general aviation business today.

The Happy Bottom Riding Club site is the location for the annual Edwards Air Force Base Poncho Barnes Day celebration. A Barbeque is held to honor the remembrance of this aviation pioneer.



# INTERPLANE MAINTENANCE



Quality Maintenance for all Piper Aircraft

Bacchus Marsh Airport Victoria

For enquiries please contact Kieran: 0428 645 084

[info@interplane.com.au](mailto:info@interplane.com.au)



## 2011 Calendar of Events

Date	Event
January	
February	
March	Avalon Air Shows Down Under Volunteers to assist with static display of aircraft required. Volunteers to assist with manning the display Contact Faye Warren 0438 598 976
April	Easter
May	
June	Fly in to Scone Contact Alan Gordon 0409 364 005
July	Kakadu Fly in Contact Barry McCabe 0409 226 411
August	PPP Contact Faye Warren 0438 598 976
September	
October	AGM - Echuca
November	
December	

## Places of Interest

### Mount Surprise

Mount Surprise is a railway town on the old Cairns to Forsayth Railway line and is the first Gulf Savannah town encountered by visitors approaching from the east.

It is the centre for gem fossicking with quantities of topaz, quartz, spinel, garnet, cairngorm and aquamarine to be found. Mount Surprise sits on the edge of the immense Undara lava field caused by ancient volcanic eruptions in the McBride Plateau. The surrounding country is flat, wooded savannah grasslands, with isolated hills. There are several activities to undertake at Mt Surprise: fossicking, Undara lava tubes, 40 Mile Scrub National Park and the Savannahlander train.

#### LOCATION

- 319 km west of Cairns
- 821 km east of NT border

#### AIRSTRIP

- Latitude 18° 10'S
- Longitude 144° 17'E
- Elevation 1300 ft
- Runway 04/22
- Sealed and Linemarked 1150 m
- Strip width 15m

#### ATTRACTIONS

Go fossicking: Mt Surprise is an ideal area to either fossick for one's own gemstones or to get local information on the gem-fields check with the local businesses of Mt. Surprise.

Visit the lava fields: to the east of Mount Surprise is the toe of the lava flow which originated from the 164 craters of the McBride Plateau. This is the youngest volcanic system in Australia at only some 190,000 years old. There are basalt tunnels which run for some 160 kilometres underground. The tubes can only be accessed through the Savannah Guide Post located at Bedrock Village and at Undara Experience on the Undara Volcanic National Park.

Experience the Savannahlander: Mt Surprise is on the Savannahlander route which is a weekly tourist service running from Cairns to Forsayth. This train journey is an international rail treasure allowing people to experience one of the more unique rail experiences in the world.

### Bedrock Village Caravan Park and Tours

Bedrock Village Caravan Park was designed and built by Joe and Jo Lockyer on our 9 acres of bush land in 1998. Our dream was to offer the many travellers moving between Cairns and Karumba in the Gulf, a comfortable, attractive base from which to enjoy the abundant natural treasures in the region.

Joe's membership with the highly acclaimed Savannah Guides Organization goes back over 17 years. His outback charisma, passion and extensive knowledge of Mount Surprise and its environs ensures your tour with him is an unforgettable experience.

Bedrock Village offer daily tours to the Undara Lava Tubes, weekly tours to Einasleigh and Copperfield Gorge on the Savannahlander train and a tour to a local cattle station once a week.

