

G'Day from Newcastle, Australia - Terry Barker

Thirty years after leaving PRS, I read a newspaper ad for PRS-ites placed by Mavis Thompson in South Australia. Thanks, Mavis. Within days of joining the Association I was within e-mail distance of Eric Greaves in Canada, an old friend from Drake days. The trouble with moving to the other side of the globe and constantly changing address was that eventually the letters from the old PRS crowd decreased as I progressively lost contact.

I spent my final three years of school at PRS, before being transported to Australia. I joined the RAAF, gained my pilot wings in 1971 and flew transport aircraft around Asia, North America and the Gulf for the next 24 years. In the early eighties I ejected from my first marriage and later married an artist. My 20-something son and daughter both live in Melbourne. When I wasn't flying aircraft, I was jumping out of them. Five of my RAAF years were at the Army's Parachute Training School where I saved my freefalling life a few hundred times before I developed an allergy to gravity. After my bones set, I returned to squadron flying until it was time to stop living out of a high-speed tube and changing residence every few years. I bought a place in Newcastle, a couple of hours North of Sydney and took a few years off to relax and go sailing before eventually accepting a job with Defence - helping to acquire new aircraft.

Between droughts and firestorms, the warm weather downunder is an agreeable improvement on the cold skies and snowdrifts I remember from Wilhelmshaven. I recall snapshots rather than entire anecdotes from PRS: busted from monitor one month, boosted to prefect the next - can't remember why; 'widow-makers' flying overhead; cheap wine on a beach at Wangeroo; do I remember beer in the sixth-form club? Was it legal? And some memory of our housemaster, Brian Carter, attempting to investigate an expended prophylactic discovered in the attic. I took photographs of everything back then, including some to illustrate the Cavalier, and surprisingly a few negatives and slides still exist. I'm getting some reprints done, which I'll scan and upload to the website.

The Wilhelmshaven Association 'cast of thousands' list contains many names that I recall through the fog of time. So, to my peers of the late sixties, e-mail me - we'll do lunch.

Terry Barker (Drake / Lawson 1966 - 1969).