



The Congress Carbiner

For sport and good fellowship

SPECIAL EDITION FOR CONGRESS 2014

“You had to be there....”

This edition of The Carbiner has been produced for distribution to those who attended the 12th Carbine Club International Congress held on the Gold Coast from 4-11 July 2014 and hosted by the Queensland Chapter of the Club.

Thank you to all those who attended and helped to make this yet another memorable experience - we can now look forward to Congress 13 in Perth, WA in March 2016!

"You had to be there....."

A few recollections from our wonderful week on the Gold Coast at the outstanding Palazzo Versace hosted by the Carbine Club of Queensland:

The week was billed in the early Congress Newsletters as promising to "introduce aspects of the Gold Coast not previously experienced", and so it was, from the sumptuous surrounds of Palazzo Versace and our very own headquarters on water's edge at the Vie Bar to racetracks, footy fields, casinos, wineries and theme parks, all with a special Carbine bent.

The Vie Bar.....

What a week it was, kicking off with an "easy day" on Friday 4th July with registrations and then a getting to know you opening cocktail party at the Vie Bar where the staff attended to our every want with a friendly smile.

Fittingly this was Independence Day as the Carbiners celebrated their own independence from the workaday world for the upcoming week, and celebrate they did as old acquaintances were renewed and new faces were welcomed in true Carbine style.

As noted later by The Watcher, there was a keen tussle to take the first night honours by being the last standing - an ambitious bid was launched by regular Congress participants Mike and Robbie Loughhead from Tasmania, CC WA President Noel Carter ably supported by wife Jenny vied strongly in a valiant attempt to claim the prize for the West, and our very own Mouseketeer and singing sensation Arthur Laing put in a strong performance for the ACT.



But the winners on the night were Mike and Melle Scales from far away Hong Kong who made it a double win by going on to further glory the next day in winning the Fashions on the Field at the Congress Raceday.

Our generous Queensland hosts forgot to call "time" at the scheduled finishing hour of 7pm, leaving plenty of time to ensure that no story was left untold (or unembellished), and this was just Day One.

(PIC: Chairman Lloyd with Mike Scales at the track)



Each night the Vie Bar served as a gathering place to contemplate the events of the day and to remind us of the next day's activity: Congress Chairman Lloyd Meredith really hit his straps here, this being the third Congress he has steered, notwithstanding that he did on one occasion in the corridors mistake a

couple of bemused, complete strangers as delegates, extending a hearty Congress welcome to them! Appearances by The Watcher were supported by other Carbiners sharing some of their story with us.

Dr Barry Taranto (Tas), accompanied by wife Dr. Beth, revealed a latent talent for joke telling (he told the jokes, not Beth!), while some other brave souls took the stage to share their story of meeting their wives - Dr Mike Loughhead from Tas revealed how he cemented his "love at first sight" with Robbie by snipping her for £10 at the races to back, luckily, a winner.

The ever smiling Dr. Susie Simcock (NZ) who was amongst the first lady members admitted to a Carbine Club listened intently as husband Dr. Jon told his story and, not to be outdone, John McIntyre (ACT) at one stage decided that it was a good place to renew his wedding vows with wife Anita and in a touching gesture presented Anita with his Congress name tag - bragging rights of 52 years of marriage allowed him to get away with that.

John was quickly gazumped by fellow ACT member Ron Fisher who is soon to notch up 60 years of wedded bliss with Bev; Ron also shared a secret of longevity with us all, and one we were happy to test out- take a good dose of red wine everyday!

The Vanuatu team was starting to settle in nicely in the early stages of Congress, Matt Measey told us about his brewery and with Emily Bani put in a strong performance on the dance floor on Friday night which made us think of establishing a "Fred Astaire & Ginger Rogers" prize, while Andy Cottam was just warming up for his later roles as orator and performer, with his wife Regina assuring us that "Andy is really very quiet" - yeah right! Oh, and Andy showed great foresight in never leaving home without his stubby holder!

Arthur Laing (ACT) startled us with some great jokes and as the singing syrup took hold then went on to do his impression of Kris Kristofferson singing "Sunday Morning Coming Down", Gerry Rea (NZ) (pic right) shared some great sporting shower moments with us, and Garth McIlwain offered insights to PNG; these and other contributors no doubt paved the way for others to tell their own tales tall and true.



The three Ps, performance, persistence, and punctuality, are stressed at Congresses, and no finer examples of these can be found than in our two members and partners who have been to every one of the 12 held so far. Ken and Heather Page (NSW) together with Allen & Marj Aylett were acknowledged for their outstanding support of the Club and Congress, a remarkable achievement.

Ken was a long term office bearer of the NSW chapter and has been acknowledged by that Club by being awarded life member status. Allen needs no introduction to Carbiners and was of course instrumental in founding Congress, also serving as Congress Chairman for the first nine events. A tremendous effort from both couples and we look forward to seeing them in Perth in 2016.



The Buses.....

Three buses were needed to move the thrill seekers to and from venues and it was now that we started to appreciate and understand the level of organisation behind the smooth operation of the Congress.

We got to meet our Bus Captains and each bus started to show emerging traits: Bus Three was to become "The Singing Bus", and one wise head was overheard to remark " there are 5 people on this bus who think they can sing, and 2 who can!"

Bus One preferred a more cultural approach and leant towards the recitation of fine poetry..Bus Two was to become known as "The Sick Bay" which may say a lot about the partying habits of that group!

Our Bus Captains from the host club did a mighty job, and no-one was ever left behind, which was surely a little disappointing because it starved The Watcher of some ammo, but great for all of us hoping to get to the events and then back to the Vie Bar to ward off dehydration each evening.



A Day at the Races.....



In our own private room in the Hollindale Stand perched above the sun kissed Gold Coast race track there were more tips around than you would find on an asparagus farm. This stand was named after A.D. Hollindale, father of CCQld member Ian Hollindale who along with Steve Davoren, Peter Ladewig and Mick Ellison were the driving forces behind the host club's organisation of our Congress.

Bob McHarg, bookmaking superstar from CC Qld, gave some sage advice, and the team from PNG loudly proclaimed the virtues of the subsequent winner of the Mackay Cup with many claiming odds of up to 14/1 about the champ. This seemed to line many pockets so we were truly thankful to John Robinson, Sec CC PNG for sharing that one with us, and to Gavin Crosbie and Rob Allport for declaring it to anyone who would listen.

A number of delegates took advantage of the opportunity to get up close and personal with the horses at the barriers for the start of an 1800metre event, and this may have inspired even more fruitful punting as everyone seemed to be a winner on the day.

The Tipping Competition was a popular event- ACT's Ron & Bev Fisher's table started out with all guns blazing and went to an almost unassailable lead after the first 3 races. As with most things, Ron put this success down to having a few red wines and after race 5 this table took out the first prize of the comp, a \$50 betting voucher with bookmaker to the stars, Bob McHarg.

But as the day wore on Mike Loughhead's table came from behind to snatch victory in the last to claim an outright but narrow win and the major prize. He was later seen sharing the victor's spoils of fine wines.



The Watcher.....

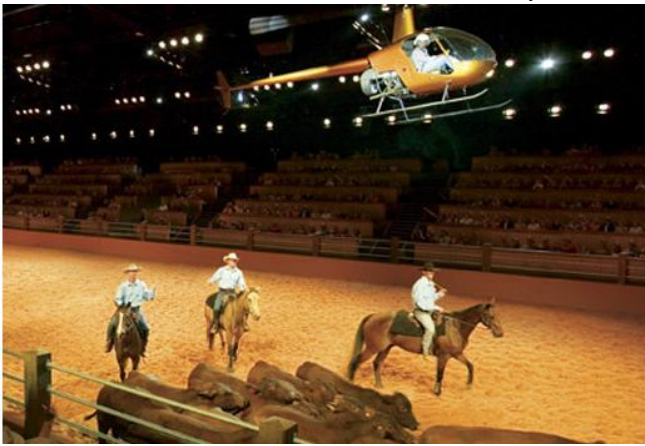
The Watcher emerged back at the Vie Bar after the races to share the scuttlebutt from the great start to the Congress. Mike & Melle Scales received a ribbing for having taken out 2 coveted prizes already with a suggestion that their clear win as the last ones standing at the Vie Bar on "First Night Frenzy Friday" was linked to their outfits which won the Best Dressed at the races- you had to be there!

But The Watchers award on this occasion went to Jan Meredith (WA), wife of Congress Chairman Lloyd, who, looking for a different backdrop, stood on the dunny to take a "selfie" to send to their daughter and in the process managed to break the toilet roll holder off the wall- try explaining that one to housekeeping!

Another who put in a mind boggling performance and was appropriately awarded by The Watcher was Sharon Doig (PNG) who jumped out of bed one morning at 4am to get a bus to Brisbane, have her hair done, and return to Versace before most of us had even thought about breakfast. Sharon's excuse was that her favourite hairdresser was rarely available in Brisbane.

Rob Allport (PNG) received a dishonourable mention for his risqué remark when he heard about Sharon's hairdresser- it brought the house down and won't be repeated here- you had to be there!

Australian Outback Spectacular.....



Hands up all those who have driven past the Australian Outback Spectacular and never thought of venturing in, probably a few in that category, but now the show surely has a whole new group of fans - what an exciting event this was, and a marvellous tribute to the horse and its part in our history.

Congressmen all (the term covers all Delegates and is non-gender specific) were enthralled by this event - horses, helicopters and heroes of the bush, and a very slick operation to get us all fed and watered. It was a bit of a marathon to get us there, but well worth it in the end.



Carbine Club Congress Lunch.....



Over 400 attendees headed to Jupiter's Hotel & Casino for the major luncheon where they were joined by a host of sporting stars including Olympians from all walks of sport.

Pat Welsh, Channel 7's Head of Sport, shared the MC duties with CCQLD member Ian Healy as they took us through interviews with the stars and we heard some great tales of sporting feats - beach volleyball Olympian Natalie Cook had the crowd laughing as she showed us why she is not known as a shrinking violet and together with Olympic swimmer Julie McDonald explained how they are

promoting junior sport; NRL Chief David Smith gave an insightful interview and might have to consider relinquishing some NRL booty to Natalie and her sporting passions or face the consequences!

If you had any doubts that you were in Queensland, League greats Billy Moore (he of the "Queenslander" chant fame) and Origin coach Mal Meninga dispelled them promptly and of course there was a call to arms by video from King Wally.



O'Reillys Vineyards-our education day.....

At this stage of Congress it was time to have a breather, take a trip into the country and rejoice in all that crisp mountain air which is part of the O'Reilly's Canungra Valley Vineyard experience.



Greeted on arrival by the friendly staff with samples of the award winning local wines, delegates settled in to firstly hear about the wines from the winemaker and then to hear from Peter O'Reilly who took us through some of the history of his pioneering family as they tamed the beautiful country side.

In a very pleasant surprise Peter gave everyone a personally dedicated signed copy of his book "The Spirit of the O'Reillys" and the family also provided the prize for the winner of the rubber duck race, accommodation at the renowned O'Reillys Guest House which is situated a little further up the valley.

Now those duck races were a treat - 5 heats of 30 starters in each (the TAB would love those numbers), the first 6 in each heat through to the final; track bias was evident early with the number 1 saddlecloth to the fore in a couple of heats but it was number 20 for Bernie Lange (SA) greeting the judge in first place.

A monstrously large meal required plenty of the delightful wines and local boutique beers to wash down - much debate on the merits of the Sparkling Semillon versus the Reserve Verdelho, and of course the Shane Reserve Shiraz was a perfect accompaniment for the barbecued offerings. And don't forget that bread and butter pud cake at the end to make sure we didn't go home hungry!

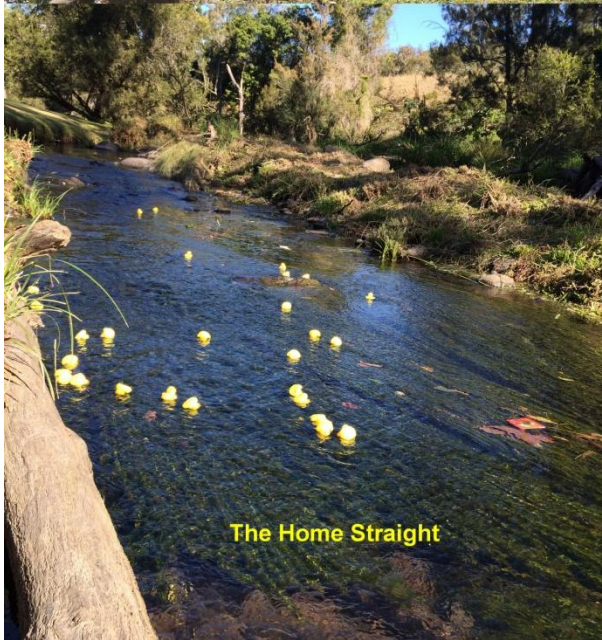
An indigenous presentation on the creekside lawn followed by a demonstration of the skills of birds of prey featuring an owl, falcon and eagle rounded out a great, action packed education day.



Riders in the stand



The start



The Home Straight



The finish Line





State of Origin.....

Billed as one of the top 6 sporting events in Aust, and certainly a great spectacle enjoyed by all, even those who courageously donned the blue scarf at the start of the evening.

Arriving early in the 3 bus convoy from the Coast we all went to "church" enjoying pre game food, drinks and entertainment in marquees set up in the grounds of the church adjacent to Suncorp Stadium, and ventured back here after the game to give the traffic time to clear.



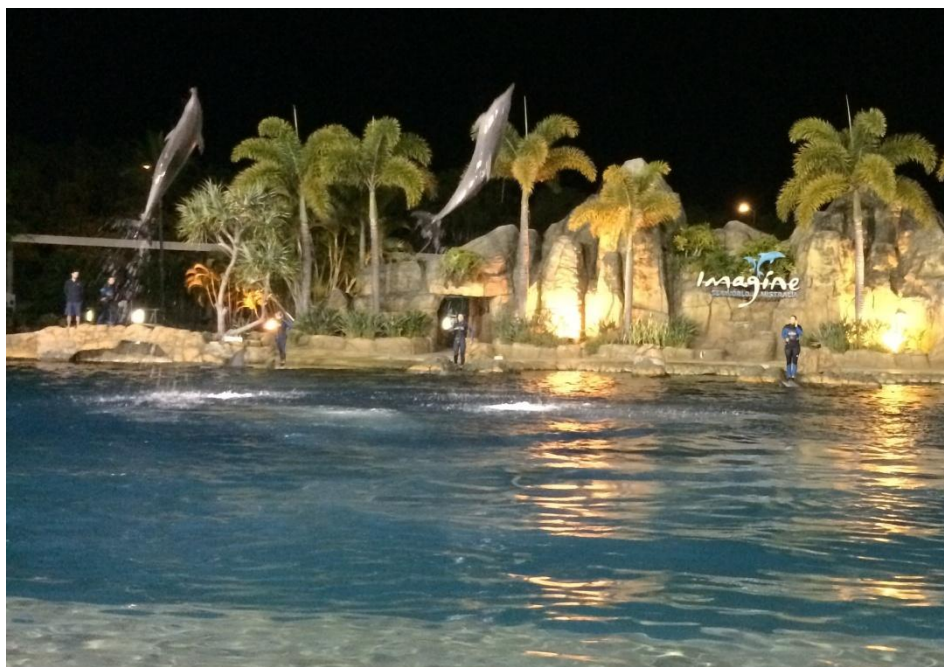
Dinner with the Dolphins.....



The closing event of the Congress was the exclusive poolside seafood dinner with the dolphins - we learnt that, not unlike some Carbiners, dolphins never sleep. Certainly they weren't asleep as their trainers put them through their paces in an exhibition that was simply stunning.



The opportunity to be so close to these amazing aquatic mammals was a real highlight to end a highlight week



Thanks.....

Our heartfelt thanks to the Carbine Club of Queensland for their outstanding hospitality, this was truly a great Carbine experience. The co-ordinating committee of Steve Davoren, Ian Hollindale, Mick Ellison and Peter Ladewig left no stone unturned.

Bus captains Bob McHarg, Mick Stephens, Byron Cannon, Peter Gwynne, Sam Barton and David Bryan never left anyone behind, and Congress Chairman Lloyd Meredith was always there, as he was in the lead up, to lend his experience and advice.

We look forward to joining Lloyd in his home state for the next Congress!

Many thanks also to Michael O'Brien, CC QLD, for sharing his photos with us.

13th Carbine Club International Congress.....

The next International Congress will be hosted by the Carbine Club of Western Australia in March, 2016 commencing on Tuesday the 8th and ending on Sunday 13th.



President Noel Carter gave us a rundown and warm invitation to join them at The Rendezvous Grand Hotel on Perth's Scarborough Beach overlooking the Indian Ocean; following the Congress a post conference tour to the famed Margaret River region for 3 days is in planning.

Noel, pictured at left practising his leadership skills by leading a troupe of our ladies down the red carpet at Sea World, knows what a Congress is all about so our journey to "The State of Excitement" is eagerly awaited.