

YACHTING FELLOWSHIP'S ECHUCA WEEKEND

One of Rotary's newest fellowships, the Victoria Fleet of Rotary's yachting fellowship IYFR continues its steady growth in interest, numbers and activities, with a recent trip to the historic inland port city of Echuca. Though largely-strangers to each other prior to the weekend, it took no time at all before the Rotarians and partners were waxing nautical and totally immersed in a fun weekend of activities.

On the weekend of 24th/25th May the group met up at Echuca's Beechworth Bakery for afternoon tea - our travellers having come from as near as Shepparton but as far afield as Melbourne and then headed off for a street walk and the important business of restaurant selection for dinner. The choice of an excellent Italian restaurant was truly inspired, as we all enjoyed a beautiful meal in great company. On seeing how well the group was getting along, the waitress asked how long we had all been friends and, to her utter amazement (but then again in typical rotary fellowship way) we said that we had only just met!

The highlight of the weekend, and thanks to a helpful Echuca rotarian's assistance to arrange it, was Sunday morning's guided tour of the historic wharf conducted by local character Buster and his one-legged cocky, followed by our cruise on the paddlewheel steamer P S Pevensey to our lunch at Morrison's winery. The nautical buffs loved the Pevensey experience, as the grand old girl, built 1911, 111 foot in length, a mere 2 foot of draft and 136 tonne steamed majestically at 5 mph amid her home territory of towering river gums and broad sweeping bends on the great river. The sight of the grand old wharf and the many other historic paddlesteamers was truly exciting.

After the sumptuous lunch and our safe return to the Echuca wharf, we bid our farewells to our IYFR buddies (until next time that is) which will be around shortly given other events on the cards.

The IYFR (International Fellowship of Yachting Rotarians) is spread throughout the world, with 2 fleets in Victoria, the first at Gippsland Lakes and the second more-recent fleet -ours (chartered in December 2004). Members come from across all Victorian rotary districts and share a nautical interest, as some are sailers, others power-boaters whilst others are without a craft but nevertheless enjoy just being on the water.

For more details, view either www.iyfr.net or www.rotarymariners.org or contact the Victoria Fleet Commodore Bill Chapman on 0410 583 532.

