

OUTBACK PATROL MARCH 10th-14th 2008

Rescue Mission – & how shall they Go ???

Pilot: John Cross

Presenter:

Goodnews the
Clown (Garry
Reynolds)



3 – 4 weeks before Les starts organizing itinerary – itinerary comes together in record time.

2 weeks before My friend the Patrick introduces me to his friend John, a businessman, who has a plane. Patrick told John about my ministry work through Outback Patrol, as "Goodnews the Clown". John asked if he could learn more and invited Marianne and I out for tea Friday night.

Friday night 1 ½ weeks before. Great time of fellowship with John and a great meal. Shared all about what the Lord has me doing. John is very interested and a great supporter of scripture in schools. John has always been a huge supporter of Evangelism to the masses. Most of us think in terms of a class or two or a school – John is a strategic thinker who thinks in 1000's.

I invite John to jump on board immediately and head out to the outback on the next trip. He said he'd pray about it and tell me early the following week.

One week before.

John says Yes count him in. Les and John meet and greet over the phone. Les finalizes itinerary – very busy. Outback NSW and Queensland – up to 4 gospel/shows per day. I confirm departure times with John from "Rutherford/Maitland" airport about 9am.

The outback towns we go to, mostly don't even have a shop, so I had it on my heart to take a mini variety shop with me.

5 days before.

Very sore throat – attacked by upper respiratory tract infection. Prayed but the attack continued, went to doctor who gave me prescription for antibiotics and throat spray for painful throat – spray has instant effect and lasts about 1 ½ hours. Rang a few more people to pray for me "Help" I'm under some serious attack here! As I came out of the doctors I notice a temporary "variety store" set up in the shopping centre – everything was just \$1. I couldn't believe it – I went in and filled a shopping trolley with hundreds of goodies for "Goodnews the Clown's Variety Store".

The idea was at the end of each show I'd open up the store and all the kids could come up to my suitcase and dig around for the item of their choice, pull things in and out and shuffle them around and take one free. They loved it, the teachers thought it was terrific too.

They also had nice looking clocks which I bought enough for all the schools. I made "Outback Patrol" stickers and turned the clock into a promo/marketing tool to leave with every school as a gift from Outback Patrol.

Monday

Up early, into costume and off to Rutherford by 8.15am.

John's Piper Saratoga fuelled and ready to go. John appeared out of hanger, I said goodbye to Marianne, talked to Les on the phone, we all prayed for the mission then we were off – a perfect day for flying.



First school = Tooraweena Public School, near "the Waarambungles". This is my first time here and John's – and John's first trip to the outback. Teachers aid who picked us up and showed us around the town. School has nice hall and facilities – 2 composite classes for about 20 kids – thought I was going to lose my voice through the show – very croaky. Show is Easter message about Peter and his continued attempts to prevent Jesus from doing his mission which of course ties into our continuing attempts to prevent Jesus from doing his work in our lives.

Goodnews performed a "rap song" over and over during the message to put forth the point that Jesus was "heading for the cross" no matter how many times Peter tried to prevent him. Kids enjoyed the story and fun. Opened up Goodnews variety store – no variety stores in Tooraweena.

The kids went out to play and the staff put on cakes and coffee.

Out to strip and then to Weilmoringle in central north NSW. This is very much an Aboriginal community, with the strip about 200 metres from the school but they came across and picked us up all the same. A crowd of kids and parents and other locals shyly awaited our arrival. "Goodnews" gently introduced with the crowd who were having morning tea we joined in, then off to a very dusty and basic hall ready for a show for the community including even the dogs came which made the show quite funny as they barked at "Goodnews" antics. I asked how the "Sorry" declaration had affected the locals to a couple of indigenous Christian ladies and they said it was a burden removing feeling – I told them about a local indigenous author/speaker that I heard on Rhema FM in Newcastle "we know Donna" so it was great thing...they invited us back to their camp for a meal but we had to decline their offer as we were off to Cunnamulla, in hindsight we could have spent some time with them.

Into Cunnamulla strip. Hot afternoon, unload the plane and John refuels. Rang our hospitality billet "Dot" from Wayne and Jane's little church. Wayne and Jane away in Canberra to a conference. Wayne flew himself in a borrowed plane. Most homes in Cunnamulla are a very basic fibro. Dot's house I very compact 3 bedroom but John and I have a bedroom each, spend a lot of time with Dot sharing many bible truths and promises. Evening meal shared with us and a neighbour from across the road. Phoned Les and phoned home. Got to bed for an early start and a big morning tomorrow. Cunnamulla State School 8.30am start



Tuesday

At school around 8.15 Kids talked to Goodnews, quite a few wild kids eager to give Goodnews a hard time and of course Goodnews earns their "honour" for toughing it out with them.

Meet some staff then John helps set up in big under cover area about 80 kids in the school now mostly indigenous. Shows here in the past have been to about 300 kids. Classes arrive over a period of about 10 minutes so Goodnews performs pre show warm up then into the Easter story when all arrived.

All seemed to have a lot of fun "Goodnews" asked for extended time "I could stay all day" the kids and the teachers said that would be OK but "Goodnews" remembers he needs to be in Eulo state school by 11am Finished show went back to Dots for a cuppa then to the strip and to Eulo. Managed to get reception at Eulo strip with aerial up on my new Telstra Blue Tick Next G phone. Teachers aid picked us up. Headed back and to another cuppa in staff room and well in under building (very basic) Set up in classroom for about 18 lovely kids, Opened the variety shop at end. Eulo is very blessed and has 1 shop. But "outback Patrol Variety shop is free." Kids loved it and enjoyed the story and the song. I've had reports that kids everywhere still sing the rap song months later.

I asked for rappers from the audience, got a few volunteers who certainly were much more flexible than "Goodnews".

Off to the plane and to Thargomindah.

New headmaster picked us up. He sounded very enthusiastic about serving in the outback, after some pretty wild kids schools on the coast. He didn't know quite what to expect when we arrived – asked us what our message was but was very rapt at the end of the show.

Funny show as Goodnews was presenting show from in front of the



bubblers. At one point in the show about half the kids decided to get up walk passed Goodnews and get a drink... they did this one by one probably 8 or more kids. Goodnews decided to make it a big funny interlude by grabbing his drink as well and made comments such as "Yep these shows are thirsty work." Principal stated that he loved the interactive improvised drama of the show as he minored in Drama at uni. I was appreciative that he left all interaction to Goodnews and didn't try to command order to a seemingly chaotic crowd. "The wilder the better for Goodnews".

John talked further with him in regards to scripture on DVD's.

Off to the plane and off to Quilpie

Picked up at Quilpie and taken back to the "Brick" an old hotel now occupied by a Christian family and available as a ministry tool for pilgrims such as us. I had thought there was an outreach social night but this was not to be the case, instead, John & "Goodnews" traveled from place to place doing mini shows for families who were potential or occasional fellowshippers at a small weekly meeting.

We also visited the Hospital as the grandson of a Church member was there with 11 stitches in his leg recovering from a push bike accident. About 7 other kids were in the ward and all enjoyed a mini show from "Goodnews".

A few more stops then back to the "Brick" for dinner with the family. Hearing about the struggles and victories of a families outreach efforts into a gospel starved community.

Later that night I went to visit and fellowship with a local opal mining/evangelist. We spent the night and early morning in a very in depth bible study. He was pleased for the opportunity to open the word as there are only a few known Christians in the town.

Wednesday

Early rise the next morning, out to the strip and on the way for another big day.

First place Eromanga – very tiny community in central outback Queensland, very small school.

Very remote but the town is quite prosperous, the whole area is rich with oil like Texas. Some of the properties have up to 200 of those "dinosaur like pumps" to bring that "blackgold" to the surface. As we were approaching, over the radio came a call from a Citation jet which was on his final approach to a larger property and later found out that this was the owner of a million hectare property. The town even has an oil refinery with trucks 3 tanks long waiting to be filled.

Kids here seemed very well behaved or shy but were all the same appreciative/.

Back to the strip and onto Jundah. Into the school for about 10 kids. At Jundah are always a lot of fun I always remember them as very happy some are very cheeky. This made for a very interactive show – lots of volunteers.

Mobile phone my Telstra Blue Tick didn't work. Back to the strip and a longer flight to Birdsville. Landed and Pretty hot, John needed to refuel plane so "Goodnews" walked to the school which was just next door to the pub which is just across the road from the airport – all very handy.

Met the teacher and I set up ready for about 10 mostly indigenous kids to file in. The message went well the kids joining in well which was a bit surprising as indigenous kids are usually more shy – we had a great time.

Goodnews opened his variety store and all became very excited and eagerly queued for their turn to browse and buy at no cost.

Had to keep this show pretty well on time as we had another long flight back to

Tiboburra and had to arrive before night as there are no lights there. Took off over some of the hundreds of sand dunes in this very great desert area of Australia.

In at Tiboburra OK, rang up Les's good friend who runs the road house and she

took us to our lodgings. We then went off to the road house for evening meal, in fact the only meal for the day. We had been very busy and no time to have breakfast or lunch. Fortunately John had some fruit and nuts that we nibbled on during the flights and of course plenty of water.

The people next to us at the café were from Victoria retired and traveling the outback. We had a bit of a chat as we enjoyed our steaks. Walked to the other end of town – Tiboburra has about 6 shops and 2 pubs. Big day, both very tired. Room was airconditioned so quite comfy.

Thursday

Tiboburra school of the air. Early start 8.30 and into the distance education large studios so we could send the show over the internet to outback properties about 18 kids in the studios as well had to do show to the studio kids and camera also property kids could interact through a speaker so it was all pretty tricky.

Off to the strip and off to Wanaring.

Wanaring Kids always a lot of fun. The last time I was here we decided to walk into town from the strip which was a "big mistake". It seems so close from the airport from the air yet on the ground it is a long way. This time we phoned the

principals husband who is also the schools handyman. Turns out that both are from Newcastle – terrific they love it out here and the kids love them.

Did show and a teacher assembles the kids to perform a rendition of "Botany Bay". The kids nervously assembled and were about to begin when "Goodnews" started....."F-a-r-e----well to Old England for ever"

Oh look said the teacher Goodnews can sing it with you so it became quite a rousing rendition especially the chorus Singing tooralie tooralie tooralie addity ----

And we're bound for Botany Bay.

Now on to Louth. Tiny school 7 kids. Louth is always the cheekiest bunch on every tour but loads of fun. We all laughed and laughed.

Story and song went well so did the Variety box – kids loved it. They thanked us for bringing the story of Jesus and Easter to their school.

As with all schools I gave them also an Outback Patrol clock to remind them of the visit.

Off to the strip and over the flowing Darling River and down to Bourke for the night in a motel not very far from the airport.

Very comfortable. John has a chance to catch up on his email. We headed off to the motels swimming pool for a refreshing break on a hot afternoon.

Ahh..... missionary life is great, come on inland and join us.

Contacted Pia Bora school to arrange early pick up for devotional for next morning.

Friday

Friday – last day

Early start for Peir Bora school, no sign of lift so rang the school – a bit of a mixup. Will have to cancel staff devotional and get a lift in with Koinonia College in their bus.

Well the bus arrived, we squeezed on with the kids and hightailed it to the school for a combined Christian Schools message. About 45 kids all together – all went well. Invited volunteer rap dancers up to join in the rap song. All good.

Yo bro!!!

Back on school bus, received message from Les – Wilcannia had to cancel.

This was a blessing as we were running late. We phoned ahead to Euabalong to ask if we could bring the show on earlier, they said OK and off we flew. Flew over dirt strip couldn't see the wind sock but dust from a local farm being ploughed indicated there was no breeze so landed easy – lift already at airstrip, drove us quite a distance to school about 15 lovely kids all ready for our arrival. John set up backdrops as Goodnews did pre show warm up then into the message. All have fun learning about the message of Easter. Opened the variety shop and because this was the last part of call everyone could choose 2 items each – they thought this was terrific. All followed Goodnews to the car and then ran the length of the school chasing and waving goodbye "Goodnews" as we drove back to the strip.

On the way back we dropped into a café the only shop in town it was also a craft shop. The women out here are into "quilting" in a big way and this shop was 'chock a block full' of craft and quilting materials as well as a display for finished quilts. We had some lunch and a coke then back to the strip and off home. Maitland airport was ablaze with activity as we arrived. We flew in over kite style ultra lite also hearing that a helicopter was near by but couldn't see it.... then 5 parachuters started floating colourfully through the air back down to the strip so we had to be looking all over the place. Last shute on the ground as we made our final approach and spotted the helicopter which also touched down at the terminal. It was "black" and very hard to see.

We taxied up to John's hanger. I rang Marianne but she was already on the way. What a great time of ministry. Les rang to see how we were and praised the Lord with us for the mission. We unpacked and I got out of clown clothes. Rolled the plane away and Marianne arrived and we said our goodbyes. Another mission completed – Thank you Les, Thank you John, Thank you Jesus.

By Garry Reynolds

