

# DUTY FREED

Official Newsletter of the



RETIRED CUSTOMS OFFICERS'  
ASSOCIATION

OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA INC.

[www.rcoa.org.au](http://www.rcoa.org.au)

April 2011

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### Contributions

If you'd like to contribute an article to this newsletter, please send it, preferably by e-mail, to the editor. Copy deadline is the 11<sup>th</sup> of each month of publication.

Please address general correspondence and subscriptions to the Secretary.

All cheques are to be made payable to the 'Retired Customs Officers' Association of WA Inc.

### Membership

RCOA welcomes new members of former Customs officers. Current membership is 126.

The membership fee for former officer & spouse or single is \$10. An application form is included on the inside back page of this Newsletter.

Annual subscriptions are due on January 1<sup>st</sup> each year. Please check your address label for your current financial status.

## Future Events 2011

Wed May 11th  
Quarantine Station Tour  
Mon July 18th  
Fremantle Prison Tours  
Tues Dec 6th  
Christmas Lunch & The Iris



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## **D.I.Y. Holidays in Europe**

The current strength of the Australian dollar against European currencies makes this a very good time to consider that long-awaited trip to Europe. This article is a follow-on from *Holidays Abroad – Self-drive Europe* that appeared in *Duty Freed*, June 2008.

### **Which Airline?**

We've flown with Emirates to Europe a number of times and are happy to recommend them. Getting a free upgrade to Business Class a couple of times certainly helped, and two of the best airline meals I've ever had in Economy Class were on Emirates flights. Add in the generous baggage allowance (30kg for Economy, 40kg for Business Class) and I think you are on a winner.

Of major importance is that the flight track to Europe via Dubai is pretty direct. The 6am flight out of Perth can get you to many European airports on the evening of the same day, albeit a very long day because of changing time zones, and that seems to help the jetlag recovery quite a bit.

Coming home, we usually plan to fly out of Europe in the afternoon. This gets us into Dubai about midnight. Instead of hanging around the airport for a few hours in the middle of the night waiting for the 3am departure, we take ourselves off to an hotel for a few hours sleep and catch the next Perth departure at 10am instead. This helps break up the homeward journey and, depending on the fare you have booked, the hotel stay plus transport and breakfast may well be complimentary, courtesy of Emirates.

### **Which Airport?**

Give some thought to your entry and exit ports in Europe. You will pay quite a bit more in airfares by having different arrival and departure points. And if you are leasing a French car (see below), you could pay pick-up and/or drop-off fees amounting to some hundreds of dollars for any country other than France.

We typically fly into and out of Paris. Charles De Gaulle is far from being the most pleasant airport in the world, but if you are planning a visit there anyway you could have a few days in Paris and pick up your lease car afterwards - saves paying for the car when it would otherwise be idle.

Then, if your plans include UK, have a leisurely drive north through Picardy and the Somme area (WW1 war graves if you are interested) to Dunkirk to catch a Norfolk Lines cross-channel ferry to Dover (<http://www.norfolkline.com> (now DFDS Seaways). If you book early enough and avoid peak sailings, you can get a really good bargain. We paid about 17 pounds each way for daylight sailings in June last year which included the car and up to 5 passengers. Thus you retain your lease vehicle for your UK tour.

### **Getting Around – Self Drive**

I am a great fan of French leased cars since I think that they provide excellent value for longer term hire. In a previous article ('Duty Freed', June 2008) I praised the Citroen Xara Picasso (now called the C4 Picasso) – last year we found an even better vehicle, the Citroen Berlingo.

Apart from being a bit cheaper, it had just as much performance (it has the same engine as the C4), was a little better to drive thanks to being an inch or two taller and having reversing sensors, it was at least as comfortable and had a bit more room. The 'modutop' sun roof and the sliding rear passenger doors were definite winners.

These are only some thoughts for your consideration – it's your holiday and your budget so you choose what you want to do and how you want to do it.

### **What to Take**

- ⌘ Think about taking along a cheap four-way **power board**. Buy from e.g. Bunning's, BigW etc. for under \$5. You will then need only one European plug adaptor for the power board and can charge mobile phone, camera batteries, car navigator etc. using their normal Australian plugs. If short on your weight allowance coming home, it's cheap enough to leave behind.
- ⌘ **Tea/coffee, sugar** and a packet of **milk powder**. We like a decent cuppa for breakfast, morning tea and lunch, and tea is something the Europeans don't do very well. This is not to deny you the pleasure of watching the world go by from a pavement café, but is for when you are on the move getting from one place to another.

An inexpensive **electric jug** and **vacuum flask**. If the jug and thermos are cheap Target or K-Mart Chinese specials, you can leave them behind to save weight coming home. Or buy over there - we bought our last jug in Morrisons (UK supermarket chain) for £6 and left it behind at the end of the trip. You might also like to think about buying a couple of cheap **china mugs**.

- ‡ A **cooler bag** is handy. We take two, a small 6-pack one for beer/cool drinks and a larger fabric-covered one with a rigid plastic liner (Big W stock them) for wine, butter, fruit, cheeses etc. The choice of cheeses in Europe, especially France, is staggering.
- ‡ **Freezer bricks** can be bought on arrival or taken with you. Most places you stay will be happy to freeze them overnight for you, but be sure to write your name on them and don't forget to ask for them in the morning.
- ‡ **Doona cover.** Most places in UK and Europe supply a doona as bed covering rather than the traditional sheets and blankets. We find they are just too hot in summer. Rather than struggle to remove the doona from its cover each time, we find it more convenient to take our own cover. Buy a cheap one from a department store/hypermarket, an op shop (Oxfam, Salvation Army etc.), or take one with you.

### Lunch on the Go

- ‡ European supermarkets, especially the big ones such as Auchan, Leclerc, Carrefour, Geant etc, which are called hypermarkets, mostly stock decent take-away salads with chicken, ham, prawn, egg etc. They also do filled rolls/baguettes, but be aware that they probably won't have butter/margarine on them. If we are on the move we generally try to pick up something for lunch well before 12 noon (else they can sell out). Since the thermos already makes us self-sufficient for drinks, all we then need to do for lunch is find a nice picnic spot.

### Where to Stay

- ‡ We always prefer to stay in a **bed & breakfast** if we can ('**chambre d'hotes**' in France, '**gastezimmer**' in Germany). These usually include a continental breakfast but some of the French ones also offer an evening meal at extra cost. If you get the opportunity to try this, called '**table d'hote**', then do so. It will be good value (around 20 Euros each), generally will include a minimum of four courses and probably wine. Good fun and interesting conversation with the hosts and other guests even if you don't speak the language.
- ‡ If you can't get to a tourist bureau to book a B&B (generally before 5pm, earlier if it's touristy), or if you just want a fuss-free clean bed and shower for the night, there are a number of hotel chains that can be useful. See '**Budget Hotel Accommodation**' below. Since we have our own tea and coffee supplies, we are independent for breakfast. The Leader of the Opposition brings her own muesli and I'll get something savoury from a bakery for morning tea. Or you could grab a McMuffin from the nearest Macca's, but be aware of their opening times – after 9am in some parts of France.

### Travellers Cash

You will thank me for this – forget about Travellers Cash cards from the major banks or Thomas Cook etc. The best deal bar none, in my opinion, is to take out a **28 Degrees Mastercard** with GE Finance <http://www.28degreescard.com.au/>. You can do it online. This is a normal **credit card** but with some significant advantages.

- ‡ It's free, there is no **annual card fee**.
- ‡ They don't charge the usual **international transaction fee** (about 3%) that most card issuers do (banks, credit unions, department stores etc.).
- ‡ There is no **currency conversion fee**.
- ‡ There is no **international ATM withdrawal fee** (Maestro/Cirrus ATMs). Most Australian banks charge a flat fee of about \$5 per overseas withdrawal PLUS a percentage of the amount withdrawn.
- ‡ They don't charge a **cash advance fee** (but will charge interest if your card goes into debit).

What this all means is that, **as long as you keep the balance in credit at all times**, you will be able to withdraw cash in the local currency from an ATM while overseas, but at absolutely minimal cost. The above is my understanding at the time of writing, but **please check for yourself**.

We deposited some money on ours before leaving Australia and periodically topped it up by internet from our usual bank using BPAY (allow a couple of days). It worked flawlessly as a debit card. I also use it now as a normal credit card when paying for anything I buy from overseas e.g. eBay.

### Budget Hotel Accommodation

A feature of most of these hotel chains is the ability to book, pay and check-in 24 hours a day by automated machine using a credit card (subject to room availability). Rates are seasonal. Pre-booking/prepayment sometimes earns a discount. Use the websites to check the period you are interested in.

(Please turn to page 4)

### **Etap Hotel** <http://www.etaphotel.com/gb/home/index.shtml>

- ‡ The largest of the cheap hotel chains with hotels in France, Germany, UK, Spain, Benelux, Austria, Switzerland and Poland
- ‡ Part of the Accor Group (Sofitel, Novotel, Ibis, Mercure etc)
- ‡ En-suite toilet and shower
- ‡ Free TV, most have free Wi-fi (but chargeable in UK)
- ‡ Most have air-conditioning (Very necessary in a small room on a hot night, so check beforehand)
- ‡ Continental buffet breakfast optional €4.70
- ‡ Prices per room start about €40 per night for up to 3 persons

### **B&B Hotels** <http://www.hotel-bb.com>

- ‡ Hotels in France, Germany, Italy, Poland.
- ‡ Also in Spain (through **Sidorme** <http://www.sidorme.com/index-en.php> )
- ‡ En-suite toilet and shower
- ‡ Free TV and Wi-fi
- ‡ Almost all are air-conditioned. Newer hotels have slightly better rooms
- ‡ Buffet breakfast optional, €5.95, includes scrambled eggs and bacon
- ‡ Prices per room start about €40 per night for up to 2 persons, higher for 3 or 4

### **Premiere Classe Hotels** <http://www.premiereclasse.com/en>

- ‡ Louvre Hotels Group (Campanile, Kyriad and Tulip)
- ‡ Hotels mostly in France. Also one each in UK, Belgium, Netherlands, Poland
- ‡ En-suite toilet and shower
- ‡ Free TV and Wi-fi
- ‡ Many are air-conditioned, rooms seem smaller than the other chains
- ‡ Continental buffet breakfast €4.80
- ‡ Prices per room start about €40 per night for up to 3 persons

### **Hotel Formule 1** <http://www.hotelformule1.com/gb/home/index.shtml>

- ‡ Accor Group (same as Etap)
- ‡ Hotels in France, Germany, Spain, UK, Benelux and Switzerland
- ‡ Share toilets and showers (self-cleaning, watch your feet!)
- ‡ Free TV
- ‡ Not air-conditioned
- ‡ Continental buffet breakfast €3.70
- ‡ Prices per room start about €30 per night for up to 3 persons

### **Metro Inns** <http://www.metroinns.co.uk>

- ‡ This company purchased five former 'Formule 1' hotels in UK
- ‡ Share toilets and showers
- ‡ Free Wi-fi
- ‡ Not air-conditioned
- ‡ Continental buffet breakfast available
- ‡ Prices per room start about £24.50 per night for up to 3 persons

### **Premier Inns** <http://www.premierinn.com>

- ‡ Whitbread Catering Group UK
- ‡ Over 590 budget hotels in UK and Ireland, recent expansion to UAE and India
- ‡ Ensuite toilet and shower
- ‡ Free TV
- ‡ Wi-fi available
- ‡ Breakfast available at various prices
- ‡ Prices from £29 for 2 persons when pre-booked by internet
- ‡ **Caution**, walk-in rate can be considerably higher!

Please feel free to drop me an e-mail at [jbaird@hotmail.com](mailto:jbaird@hotmail.com) with questions or comments if you think I can help.

Jim Baird  
April 2011

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*(We have permission from Jim to include this in the 'Duty Freed' Newsletter for your information & reading)*

# Puzzle Page

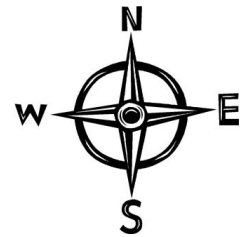
3	4	7	5	8	1	9	6	2
9	1	5	6	2	4	3	7	8
6	8	2	9	3	7	1	5	4
8	6	1	4	5	3	7	2	9
5	2	4	7	1	9	8	3	6
7	3	9	2	6	8	5	4	1
4	9	3	8	7	6	2	1	5
1	5	8	3	4	2	6	9	7
2	7	6	1	9	5	4	8	3

April Sudoku →

← February Puzzle Answer

2					3			
5	8		1			7		
1		4	5					
		1	8		2		9	
	4		9		6		1	
	6		7		1	4		
					5	9		3
		5			7		2	1
			3					5

## Word Challenge



Use your compass directions to find the correct locations for the missing letters of the alphabet. When you have completed the grid, see if you can discover the hidden city, country, river or mountain.

Note: North or South means any location along the same column. East or West means any location along the same row. Good Luck!

		J			
					V
	T				
				U	

Directions:

- A is south of E: D is south of V
- B is north of T and west of E
- C is west of Y and south of G
- E is west of S and south of J
- F is west of O: G is east of P
- H is east of J and north of O
- I is east of U: W is east of B
- L is south of B: M is north of Y
- N is north of U: O is east of A
- P is north of T: Q is west of V
- R is west of C: Z is north of F
- S is east of V and north of I
- K is south of J and east of T
- Y is east of T and south of V

## Paraprostdokian

A paraprostdokian is a phrase with an unexpected ending. some of these are clever

- ‡ Do not argue with an idiot. He will drag you down to his level and beat you with experience.
- ‡ I want to die peacefully in my sleep, like my grandfather. Not screaming and yelling like the passengers in his car.
- ‡ Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in a garage makes you a car.
- ‡ The last thing I want to do is hurt you. But it's still on the list.
- ‡ Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
- ‡ If I agreed with you we'd both be wrong.
- ‡ We never really grow up, we only learn how to act in public.
- ‡ War does not determine who is right - only who is left.
- ‡ Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit; Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.
- ‡ The early bird might get the worm, but the second mouse gets the cheese.
- ‡ Evening news is where they begin with 'Good evening', and then proceed to tell you why it isn't.
- ‡ To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.
- ‡ A bus station is where a bus stops. A train station is where a train stops. On my desk, I have a work station.
- ‡ How is it one careless match can start a forest fire, but it takes a whole box to start a campfire?
- ‡ Some people are like Slinkies ... not really good for anything, but you can't help smiling when you see one tumble down the stairs.
- ‡ Dolphins are so smart that within a few weeks of captivity, they can train people to stand on the very edge of the pool and throw them fish.
- ‡ I thought I wanted a career, turns out I just wanted pay checks.
- ‡ A bank is a place that will lend you money, if you can prove that you don't need it.
- ‡ Whenever I fill out an application, in the part that says "If an emergency, notify:" I put "DOCTOR".
- ‡ I didn't say it was your fault, I said I was blaming you.
- ‡ I saw a woman wearing a sweat shirt with "Guess" on it...so I said "Implants?"
- ‡ Why does someone believe you when you say there are four billion stars, but check when you say the paint is wet?
- ‡ Women will never be equal to men until they can walk down the street with a bald head and a beer gut, and still think they are sexy.
- ‡ Why do Americans choose from just two people to run for president and 50 for Miss America?
- ‡ Behind every successful man is his woman. Behind the fall of a successful man is usually another woman.
- ‡ A clear conscience is usually the sign of a bad memory.
- ‡ You do not need a parachute to skydive. You only need a parachute to skydive twice.
- ‡ The voices in my head may not be real, but they have some good ideas!
- ‡ Always borrow money from a pessimist. He won't expect it back.
- ‡ A diplomat is someone who can tell you to go to hell in such a way that you will look forward to the trip.
- ‡ Hospitality: making your guests feel like they're at home, even if you wish they were.
- ‡ Money can't buy happiness, but it sure makes misery easier to live with.
- ‡ I discovered I scream the same way whether I'm about to be devoured by a great white shark or if a piece of seaweed touches my foot.
- ‡ Some cause happiness wherever they go. Others whenever they go.
- ‡ There's a fine line between cuddling and holding someone down so they can't get away.
- ‡ I used to be indecisive. Now I'm not sure.
- ‡ I always take life with a grain of salt, plus a slice of lemon, and a shot of tequila.
- ‡ When tempted to fight fire with fire, remember that the Fire Department usually uses water.
- ‡ You're never too old to learn something stupid.
- ‡ To be sure of hitting the target, shoot first and call whatever you hit the target.
- ‡ Nostalgia isn't what it used to be.
- ‡ Some people hear voices. Some see invisible people. Others have no imagination whatsoever.
- ‡ A bus is a vehicle that runs twice as fast when you are after it as when you are in it.
- ‡ If you are supposed to learn from your mistakes, why do some people have more than one child?
- ‡ Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.

(Sent in by one of our members, thank you)



# BIRTHDAYS

## MAY

Ruby BALES	1
Lavinia PIKE	2
Neil HOPKINS	3
Trixie SULLIVAN	5
Ros GATES	9
Julia STOREY	9
Mike FLYNN	11
Bob MARTIN	12
Graham CRUTTENDEN	13
Sue WEBB	15
Albert DAVEY	18
Emma DAVIES	20
Carol NEEDHAM	22
Alan CAUDWELL	23
Pat WILLS	24
Con GREENWOOD	25
Len HARDMAN	27
Colleen SORENSEN	27
Fran FOSTER	28
Paul HUBBARD	28
Bridie O'NEILL	30

## JUNE

Phil BURDGE	4
Frank MENNER	5
Richard COLEMAN	7
June MENNER	8
Nita BLACK	11
Roslyn BOYLAN	12
Pat BISSAKER	14
Terry EMERSON	14
Val HARDMAN	14
Jeannette BURDGE	17
Phyllis SMITH	18
Paul MURPHY	21
Yvonne PAGE	23
Greg BARTROP	28
Bob REX	28

## JULY

Margaret HEAVEY	4
Elva JOST	4
Hedda LAMERS	5
Eleanor SMART	5
Michael METCALF	8
Les HERON	9
Brian JOST	9
Sue SWEET	9
Trevor NEEDHAM	12
Christopher CORNISH	15
Gary BYRNE	17
Roly SWEET	18
Sue HOPKINS	26
Max GERRYIN	27
Shirley McDONALD	28
Robyn METCALF	29
Kay SCHMIDT	29
Kevin SHEPHERDSON	29



# WEDDING ANNIVERSARY'S

## MAY

Jim & Norma ANDERSON	2
Ross & Wendy BLACKALL	3
Paul & Pauline MURPHY	11
Bryan & Pat BISSAKER	24
Terry & Emma DAVIES	25
Susan ARMSTRONG & John DANIELS	31

## JUNE

Ron & Margaret JARVIS	4
Darrell & Patricia JOHNSON	4
Max & Sherren GERREYN	8
Jack & Stella EARNSHAW	10
Les & Moira HERON	18
Bill & Pat WALKER	22
Rod & Denise SPENCER	26

## JULY

Brian & Kathleen WARD	4
John & Colleen SORENSEN	6
Jim & Bridie O'NEILL	7
Bob & Sue MARTIN	8
Mike & Renee FLYNN	12
Ray TREEN	16
Sandra & Alex SIMS	26



## Events Page

Woodman Point Quarantine Station, Munster



Wednesday May 11th 2011

\$10.00pp includes morning tea

10:00am Meet at the Security gate to park the cars inside  
10:20am Morning Tea followed by the tour  
(approx 2 hours)

Booking essential - by Tuesday May 3rd please



## Coming Events



### Fremantle Prison Tours

Monday July 18th

Cost & Times to be confirmed

[The Great Escape Tour](#) in the morning  
[Lunch](#) @ the Prison Cafe  
[Tunnel Tour](#) in the afternoon

Keep this date free in your busy itinerary  
More information in the next 'Duty Freed'

[WW2 Tunnels Guided Tour](#) at the Leighton Battery heritage Site followed by a [picnic/barbecue](#) possibly in September, more information later in the year



[Christmas Lights](#) on the Mandurah Canals has been considered for December, more on that much later in the year when dates & times are available.

Please note: this is not a definite outing at this stage. You will be expected to find your own transport to Mandurah for this evening trip if we go ahead.

Other possible events this year are Dinner @ TAFE Fremantle, Canal Cruise in Mandurah

Tuesday December 6th - Christmas Lunch @ The Iris Bar & Restaurant, Jandakot

For all bookings (unless stated otherwise) please contact  
Hazel Webb, 78 Arundel Drive, WELLARD 6170

 9439 2268

 0409 105 101

or email

(See RCOA - Functions Booking Slip - page 9)



## News of Members

- ‡ We endeavour to keep up to date with our members where we can however it has been a bit quiet lately with no reports of holidays, success at sport or falls in the shower.
  - ‡ If any of you have *News of Members* or have some yourself (that is printable) please let me know so that I can fill some pages with gossip, adventure, excitement etc.
  - ‡ Our next issue of *Duty Freed* is June so news to me before 11th please preferably by email
- Cheers, Hazel

**Sending Money** – be it for membership renewal or for an up coming function – remember that you can send electronically to the **RCOA of WA** Account at the Bendigo Bank – **BSB 633-000 - A/c No. 121589386**

✂

**RCOA Membership Application**  **Renewal**  **Update**

**Payment to: Secretary RCOA of WA Inc. 78 Arundel Drive, Wellard 6170**

First Name:	Family Name:	Partner's Name:
Postal Address:		
Email Address:		
Phone Number:	Mobile:	
Our Newsletter includes a segment for publication of members and spouse's birth and wedding anniversary dates (day & month only printed) If you would like to share this detail with other members please complete the following (include year if you wish for our records only)		
Member B'date:	Partner B'date:	Wedding Date:
Membership \$10 Joint/Single	X No of years:	Amount paying \$
Send Duty Freed by post <input type="checkbox"/>	or email <input type="checkbox"/>	Signature & Date
Office use only:	Rec'd / /2011	EFT <input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input type="checkbox"/> AMO <input type="checkbox"/> Cheque <input type="checkbox"/> No: Trans #

✂


### RCOA Functions Booking Slip

**Payment to: Secretary RCOA of WA Inc. 78 Arundel Drive, Wellard 6170**

Names attending					
Function	Venue	Date	No	\$pp	Subtotal
				X	
				X	
				X	
<b>Signature &amp; Date</b>	/ / 2011			Total amount enclosed	\$
Office use only:	Rec'd / /2011	EFT <input type="checkbox"/> Cash <input type="checkbox"/> AMO <input type="checkbox"/> Cheque <input type="checkbox"/> No: Trans #			

## Last but not Least

**Answers to February Puzzle:** cent cento centric cerotic cert cinct cite citer cito citron  
cointer coit conceit concert concerti conte cornet correct cort cortin cote cretic cretin crit  
cronet erotic etic **INCORRECT** inert inter into intro iter necrotic netic nite niter nitre nitro  
noetic norite note noter notice noticer oint oncet ontic orectic orient otic recit recti  
rection recto rector rent return retro riot rioter rite ront ronte rort rote roti tenor tercio  
tern terr tice tier tine tire tiro tirr tone toner tonic tonier torc tore tori toric torn torr trice  
tricorn tricorne trie trier trin trine trio trior tron tronc trone

Those of you that have read Jin's article on travel and wish to re-read his first article from June 2008 simply go to [www.rcoa.org.au](http://www.rcoa.org.au), click on Duty Freed, select 2008 June and go to page 3 


Retired Customs Officers'  
Association of WA inc.




### REDGUM RURAL SERVICES

- trees pruned
- rural fencing
- gutters cleaned
- garden clean ups
- rotary hoeing
- slashing / mowing

**Bernie Webb**

 (08) 9439 2268

 0419 903 218



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