

Surprise Joy Flight

It started off like any other routine day, namely taking my 90 year old mother Beryl to her Doctor's appointment at Flinders Private Hospital. Mum's next door neighbour Helen kindly offered to drive us (from Birkenhead to Flinders Hospital) which we greatly appreciated.

The appointment ended at 10.30am and Helen suggested we have a coffee at Blackwood, followed by lunch at Crafers. As I had the day off work this idea sounded wonderful.

During lunch Helen was texting her friend Diana and Helen suggested that since Diana was in a meeting near Murray Bridge, we could all meet up with her later for a coffee in Murray Bridge somewhere when Di's meeting was finished. Again, Mum and I thought that was a wonderful idea and off we went.

On the way to Murray Bridge, Helen said she needed to find a "ladies convenience" and asked if we minded calling into a small airfield just out of Murray Bridge (Pallamana) for the purpose of using the 'ladies room'. I was aghast! The idea of just calling into the airfield for that particular purpose didn't seem right but Helen assured me it was OK, the airfield was open to the public at any time and could be used without concern. So we located the airfield and in we drove.

Whilst there, Helen text Diana again to determine if her meeting had finished. Apparently, she (Diana) was only about 10 minutes away from Murray Bridge and would let us know when she was there. As the weather was very hot that day, Helen suggested we stay under the shade of the trees at the airfield until we met with Diana (who it was determined would drive to the airfield and meet us there).

We made use of the time by sitting on the patio of Windsock Lounge and watching the two-seater planes practising their take-off and landings which was very interesting and helped to pass the time. Within a few minutes, one of those two-seater planes landed and slowly taxied up to where we were. (We were standing at this stage to get a better look.) I could see the Pilot madly waving to us – then realisation hit me - it was Diana!!

Yes, it was all a setup! I had met Diana a few times very briefly before and had no idea she could fly or the fact she even owned her own plane. Diana had just come back from a flight to Kangaroo Island. She asked who would like to be the first to have a flight in her plane.

My 90 year old mother promptly stepped forward while I was still in deep shock trying to work out how I didn't suspect a thing (plus the fact I was nervous having never flown in a two-seater before).



Mum about to get into the plane

I couldn't let my mother show me up so when it was my turn, I must admit my heart was beating twice as fast as usual, but once up there it was the most magical feeling and Diana made me feel so at ease. I loved every second of every minute. We were both up for about 30 minutes and we saw the magnificent River Murray and the quaint little towns way down below – a truly awesome sight.



Me, very nervous and excited

I didn't want the wonderful surprise day to end, but we ended it by dining at the German Arms in Hahndorf on the way home. My mother is so lucky when it comes to the pokies and when Helen said there was time to put a couple of coins in the slot there was no stopping her. For a \$2 outlay the lucky lady won \$98. You couldn't wipe the smile off her face - a perfect ending to a perfect day

I can honestly say that between Helen and Diana they gave Mum and me one of the best days of our lives. A huge thank you to both Diana and Helen.

Rosalie Brooks and Beryl Hayman – 14/12/09