



Australian Vintage Aeroplane News

Newsletter of Queensland Vintage Aeroplane Group / Australian Flying Museum Inc.



Wirraway VH-WIR now in Queensland!
(Photo—Craig P. Justo).

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Message from the Editors:

- Have you something to share with our other members?
- Would you like to contribute to **your** newsletter?
- Do you have something to sell? Place an ad in our Classifieds!
- Just send your articles and pics to: info@qvag.com.au

Membership Matters

- If you know someone who would like to join, there is now an **on-line membership form** on our web-site.
- If you refer a new Full Member to the Group, we will give you a **stainless steel insulated mug** in return!

**Last Mystery Aircraft
was the
Pilatus Porter!**

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Above: Founding Chairman
Patrick John Harrington's
Member Profile starts on
page 7.

(Photo – Craig P. Justo).

**Check out
our website:
www.qvag.com.au**

From the Desk of the President - Andy Heath

Hi everyone, firstly Happy New Year to you all and I hope it is a year that brings you happiness and fulfillment in every endeavour undertaken, especially in your passion for aviation.

Well, what can I say about the end of 2010 and the start of 2011, only one thing comes to mind - RAIN!! My feet have grown webbing and I need a hovercraft to cut the grass. The Caboolture Airfield will soon offer float-plane endorsements without having to fly away from home base.

Anyway on a more serious note, the conditions for partaking in recreational aviating have been very scarce over the past month or more and don't appear too bright in the immediate future. With so much humidity and moisture around and not being able to take the pride and joy up for a spin in quite a considerable time, let's not forget to be extra vigilant in our next pre-flight before getting back in the blue.

One notable event in the past month was the arrival of CAC Wirraway 652 at Caloundra Aerodrome.

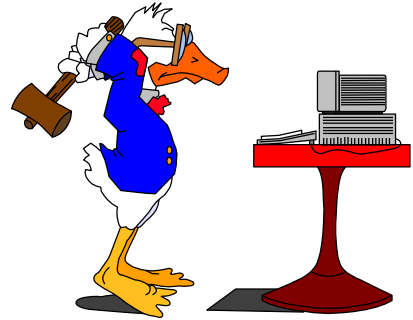
This Warbird was flown from Parafield, South Australia and piloted by QVAG / AFM Inc. member Matt Denning, becoming the first exhibit to be flown into the Queensland Air Museum's Caloundra facility. The Wirraway will be on exhibit shortly.

While talking of interests in Warbirds and the like, a visit to the Caboolture Warbird Museum and the Queensland Air Museum is a great day out for the kids on a wet weekend, or dare I say even a sunny one, "Big Kids" included!

Well that's about all for now, except don't forget the upcoming Fly-In on February 27th, and remember the Winter Retreat Clubhouse at Watts Bridge is now available for members to drop in and avail themselves of a cuppa or a cold drink.

Just give Jackie, Craig Justo, or myself a call for the Key Access Code.

Fly Safe, Stay Safe
Andy Heath (President)
a.k.a. "Captain Pugwash".



Editorial

G'day folks! Welcome to my first issue as AVAN Editor.

Between Pat Harrington's member profile, Jackie and Ross' history of Watts Bridge and Craig's prolific output, I haven't had to do much except bang it all together.

This is a good thing though as having plenty of material is an Editor's dream and I was lucky to even find a spot for my ramblings!

I'm looking forward to getting your articles and photos—please keep them coming.

There must be a million untold aviating and restoration stories out there—let's hear them!

I've kept the little cartoon which Jackie used—it is quite appropriate at times when dealing with the infernal electronic confuser (a.k.a FRED)!

Regards,
Christian Smith



Above: If you can correctly identify this aircraft and when it was built, e-mail the Editors at info@qvag.com.au - and it's not what you are probably thinking! The first correct entry will win a QVAG / AFM Inc. Polo Shirt.



Competition Winner



Left: Member Shaun Davis was the lucky winner of a QVAG polo shirt in last month's Mystery Aircraft competition.

Christmas Party 2010



Left: The Three Musketeers at the 2010 Christmas party — L - R Mal Shipton (Website Liaison Officer), Andy Heath (President, a.k.a. Captain Pugwash) and Rob Plackett.

Right: Members enjoy the Christmas feast.

All photos this page —Jackie Bolsover.



Cessna O-2A

In July 2010, a Cessna O-2A (c/n 337-M0420) arrived at Brisbane's Archerfield Airport! Purchased by Conway Bown of Townsville, Queensland from Commodore Aerospace in Oklahoma, USA, it was unloaded from its shipping container and reassembled at Ian Aviation's facility at Archerfield!

Although the bulk of the reassembly process was completed in August, there were some unexpected delays that were due to problems with the radio installation. Following the rectification of that problem, the certification process was conducted and the machine was subsequently registered on 29 November as VH-OTU and its first Australian flight was conducted on 09 December.

With his O-2A performing flawlessly, Conway flew the machine to Townsville on 11 December where it will be based to support emergency services and undertake general charter work, contract surveillance and military historical flights.

Whereas the machine's external appearance is classic O-2A and complete with authentic livery, the interior and especially, the instrument panel sets it apart from all other O-2's!

Conway has had the machine fitted out with a Garmin glass cockpit with synthetic vision technology, an S-TEC autopilot coupled to a GNS430W GPS and an ADS-B transponder that has replaced most of the original instruments in front of the pilot! But the military cluster gauges have been retained on the right hand side for their higher accuracy. A cargo pod and five passenger seats will also be fitted when it is being utilised for charter work!



Above: Cessna O-2A— reputedly known in civilian guise as “Mixmasta bilong God” or “pushy-go-pullem” by the indigenous populations of PNG.

Formerly identified as USAF serial number 69-7622, the aircraft is a confirmed veteran of the Vietnam War as it served with the 21st Tactical Air Support Squadron that operated from the air bases at Nha Trang, Cam Ranh Bay and Tan Son Nhut in South Vietnam.

Throughout the period of Australia's involvement in the Vietnam conflict, a number of Royal Australian Air Force pilots were attached to the USAF's Forward Air Control units to perform FAC duties in O-1 Bird Dogs, O-2 Skymasters and OV-10 Bron-

cos! The arrival of “OTU” brings the number of type in Australia to four – three of which are airworthy whilst the other remains stored as a long-term restoration project.

Wirraway VH-WIR

The second oldest CA-16 Wirraway to appear on the Australian Civil Aircraft Register has been withdrawn from “active duty” and in something of a coup, it has become a part of the Queensland Air Museum's (QAM) collection at Caloundra Airport!



**Magnificent aerial shot of Wirraway VH-WIR.
Photo—Craig P. Justo**

AVAN News and Views

VH-WIR (formerly identified as RAAF serial number A20-652) was first registered on 26 August, 1986 after being purchased by syndicate headed-up by Vincent Thomas! Since that time, the aircraft has been a regular attendee at airshows and fly-ins, however its existence became even more public in August 2006 when it was “accidentally” sold via the eBay system!

The successful eBay bidder was Peter Smythe of Adelaide, however it was claimed by the former owner that he hadn't actually sold it as the winning bid was well below the aircraft's true value! A much-publicised legal dispute arose over the actual ownership and on 03 August, 2007, the New South Wales Supreme Court awarded ownership of the aircraft to Peter Smythe.

Peter recently sold the aircraft to the QAM and this acquisition was due to the generosity of “The John Villiers Trust” that provided the funds to secure the aircraft on behalf of the Museum. On 26 November, the aircraft was handed over to the QAM at Adelaide's Parafield Airport and later that day, Matthew Denning (long standing QVAG / AFM Inc. Member) test flew the aircraft in readiness for the next day's departure to Caloundra.

Unbeknownst at the time, the delivery flight was to develop into a long drawn-out and at times, frustrating saga! Having departed Parafield as planned, Matthew and Simone Denning's first stop was Mildura to refuel and then continue on to Temora for an overnight stopover! However, marginal weather on the intended track forced the overnight stopover to be effected at Mildura. On 28 November, Matthew and Simone set off for Temora but yet again, the weather



Above: Wirraway VH-WIR in company with Wirraway VH-MFW (A20-695). Photo—Craig P. Justo.

had other plans for them and they were subsequently forced to divert to Griffith. As the weather had set-in, further attempts to continue with the flight were abandoned and “WIR” was put into a hangar until an improvement allowed for a resumption of the delivery flight.

In fact the ferry flight was plagued by bad weather and what was intended to be a two-day ferry flight turned into a sixteen-day marathon! “WIR” finally departed Griffith on 11 December bound for Narromine and Toowoomba but once again a diversion was required and yet another unplanned stopover was effected, this time at Moree. The weather had improved the following day and the aircraft departed Moree bound for Toowoomba where the last refueling stop would be undertaken.

Weather again prevented the continuation and it wasn't until Monday 13 December that the last leg of the delivery flight was completed and “WIR” had finally arrived at its intended destination! Whereas that was supposed to be the machine's last flight, another was conducted on

18 December for the QAM to progress a formal welcoming ceremony and the opportunity to conduct an air-to-air photographic exercise! Matthew and Simone once again occupied the cockpits and the aircraft was flown from Caloundra to nearby Caboolture before returning to Caloundra for a final landing! A suitable escort for its final flight was provided by one of its brethren, the Caboolture Airfield based CA-16 Wirraway (VH-MFW)!

Although the delivery flight was continually interrupted by the weather influences, it had been delivered safely with Matthew reporting that it had performed flawlessly throughout.

On 22 December, the Wirraway was moved into the QAM's Hangar 2 where it will be displayed as a permanent memorial! Although the QAM intends to maintain its latest acquisition in airworthy condition and run the engine periodically, there are no plans to fly the machine again.

**© CRAIG P JUSTO—
JANUARY 2011.**

Landing Fees Maryborough and Hervey Bay Airports

The Fraser Coast Regional Council which controls both Hervey Bay and Maryborough Airports agreed at its council meeting on 27 October to not charge landing fees for private aircraft below 2,000 kg. Several months ago the Council announced its intention to charge all aircraft for landings, touch-and-goes and even for an approach with no touch-down(!). Clearly the council needed some guidance.

A group of concerned pilots and others with an interest in aviation from the Hervey Bay and Maryborough area formed a group; the Fraser Coast Aviation Group, to engage with council. The FCAG has worked with the council on the development of an MoU and ongoing relationship to provide the council with a network of aviation experience and knowledge that they wouldn't otherwise have access to without significant cost. FCAG has shown that aviation groups can work in a positive way with airport operators to improve the lot of aviators.

Warwick Henry, Vice Chairman, FCAG

Below is the joint media release from Fraser Coast Regional Council and Fraser Coast Aviation Group:

Council and aviation industry join to promote aviation on the Fraser Coast. Recreational flyers using Fraser Coast airports will not pay landing fees as part of ambitious plan to increase aviation tourism.

The plan was developed by the Fraser Coast Regional Council and the Fraser Coast Aviation Group. "The Council and the aviation industry have worked well together in the past couple of months to develop this plan", Fraser Coast Mayor Mick Kruger

said. "We are now on the same page and working together to promote the aviation industry and the Fraser Coast."

While Council might not collect as much in landing fees to offset operations at the airport, we believe that increasing the number of visitors to the region will have an economic flow on to all residents. Tourism is our major industry and we need to do whatever we can to promote it.

To promote Fraser Coast aviation Council and the FCAG will develop a Memorandum Of Understanding which clearly lays out the objectives and outcomes that need to be achieved in the next 12 months.

We look forward to establishing the Memorandum of Understanding and hope to co-operatively facilitate the development and operations of both airports to the benefit of the residents of the Fraser Coast, Chairman of the Fraser Coast Aviation Group Mike MacBeth said.

FCAG has already developed a strategy that will promote aviation and build sustainable aviation businesses in the region which it plans to implement with Council assistance.

The strategy and way forward was sparked by discussions between Council and FCAG over plans to increase landing fees.

We suggested that Council could get a better economic return to the region through promoting free recreational use and attracting aircraft than it would through charging recreational flyers landing fees, Mr. Macbeth said. FCAG believes that by promoting free recreational use, aviators from across the country will be attracted here which will help tourism and aviation businesses.

Some of the strategies that will be investigated include promoting Aviation Tourism for recreational flyers to stay on the Fraser Coast, hosting community aviation activities and events and encouraging the development of general aviation businesses at the airports.

Under the amended fees structure adopted by Council at its Ordinary Meeting today (Wednesday 27 Oct) all landings (including touch-and-go) where the aircraft is used strictly for private/recreational purposes and non-commercial purposes will be free.

Landing fees for commercial users will depend on the weight of the aircraft.

**Kevin Corcoran
Principal Officer
Corporate Communications
Corporate Marketing and Communications
Fraser Coast
Regional Council**

2010 QVAG / AFM Inc. Committee

President:	Andy Heath
Vice Presidents:	John Sinclair and Craig Thomsen
Secretary:	Jackie Bolsover
Treasurer:	Phill Ridley
Committee:	Robyn Bernhardt, Craig Justo, Doug Field, Mal Shipton
Membership Officer:	Robyn Bernhardt
Website Liaison Officer:	Mal Shipton
Public Relations Officer:	Jackie Bolsover
AVAN Editor:	Christian Smith
Events Coordinators:	Craig Justo, John Sinclair, Craig Thomsen

WBMA Airfield Council Representative: Vacant at this point in time.

Member Profile—Patrick John Harrington

Personal History:

Patrick John Harrington:
Date of Birth: 17/03/41
Date of Death: T.B.A.

We lived on a dairy farm in Romsey Victoria and my father was ex 38th and 60th Battalion first AIF and my mother was a music teacher. My father's brother was also 60th Battalion first AIF and unfortunately, he was killed at Polygon Wood on 26/09/17.

During the latter stage of World War Two, we had an Italian prisoner of war working/living on the farm. His behaviour did cause some problems but a few "visits" from Army personnel resolved those issues – I can still remember his name which was Grasso. Due to my father's ill-health, we moved off the farm and he secured a job with Trans Australian Airlines (TAA) as a store man in the engine overhaul section.

My parents built a new home at Essendon (not far from the airport) and they took in some boarders – two trainee commercial pilots from Ceylon. One guy ended up chief pilot for Air Ceylon (Sri Lanka).

One of my earliest memories is of a Bristol Freighter flying over our house one weekend afternoon with smoke pouring out of one engine as it landed back at Essendon. All of this possibly kindled my interest in aviation.

My father's ill-health again became evident and he finished at TAA and after a short spell running a corner shop, he was admitted to Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital where he passed away on 20 January 1954!



VH-BTI—RAAF Amberley September 1974.

Incidentally, the Matron-in-Charge of his ward was none other than Sister Lieutenant Vivian Bullwinkle – the sole survivor of the infamous atrocity of 16 February, 1942. On that day, Japanese troops mercilessly massacred twenty-one defenceless Australian Army Nursing Sisters on Bangka Island!

I began my schooling in 1946 when I attended the Romsey Primary School. From 1952 to 1955, I attended St Joseph's College at North Melbourne and then from 1955 to 1957, I attended Oakleigh Technical College for Year 10 (4th Form) Dip Entrance in Engineering. Due to work commitments, I did not complete the Engineering Apprenticeship and night school for Diploma Mechanical Engineering.

On 02/12/61, I married Mia, a piano teacher who was born in Arnhem, Holland in September 1942 - right in the middle of the German occupation. Her family survived the occupation and the Allies' airborne assault and battles that removed the occupying forces! They then subsequently migrated to Australia, arriving

here in 1955. We have subsequently been blessed with three children.

Our eldest daughter, Maree is a graduate of the Queensland Conservatorium of Music (violin) and is married to Tony Versace, a QANTAS Captain and son of the late Ron Versace who owned an Airfield on Samsonvale Road Strathpine (now a housing estate)! They have four children.

Our son, Frank is an ex-RAAF aircraft electrician who spent six years in the RAAF. He then served with BAE in Dhahran Saudi Arabia for five years, servicing Tornado aircraft during the First Gulf War.

Then there is our youngest daughter, Donna who is a Science graduate and works for CSL in Melbourne. They have three children.

Military Service:

On 19/10/56, I joined the RAAF Air Training Corps and achieved the rank of Corporal before leaving the ATC on 14/08/59. After my service with the Air Training

Member Profile—Patrick John Harrington

Corps, I enlisted with the RAAF's Citizen Air Force, No. 21 "City of Melbourne" Fighter Squadron! I was mustered as a General Hand /Engine Mechanic Trainee and my service with No. 21 Squadron began on 01/08/59 and lasted until 21/08/60. Having ceased civil employment, I then transferred to the Permanent Air Force and on 22/08/60, I began my training at RAAF Base Rathmines before being posted to RAAF Base Forest Hill (Wagga Wagga) for further technical training.

On completion of that training, I was posted to RAAF Base East Sale. One of my most vivid recollections is of a USAF presence during "Operation Crowflight"! The USAF was using U-2, B-50 (B-29 variant), B-57 (US Canberra) and C-124 Globemaster aircraft for supposedly "meteorological surveys".

The U-2s would depart early morning and return late in the day. We did some support work for the USAF – dispatch and receipt of the U-2s during which time we assisted with one engine change.

I was subsequently posted back to RAAF Base Forest Hill for additional Technical Engineering training and on completion, I was then posted to RAAF Base Point Cook.

My time spent there was in the airframe modification section and this involved major modifications to the Winjeel aircraft. At that time, I was mustered as an Airframe Fitter with the rank of LAC and retained that until 15/2/66 when I resigned from the RAAF.

I immediately joined the Australian Regular Army (Serial Number: 38889) and graduated from the Officer Training Unit at Scheyville, NSW! Class 2/66 Corps of the Royal Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (RAEME) - Corp Training Junior Officer RAEME Training Centre. Reassigned to the RAEME Workshops at Bulimba, Queensland, I worked on aircraft projects such as constructing Litter Platforms for the Bell Sioux Helicopter and various other smaller projects.

Yet another posting followed,

this time to the Army Aviation Workshop at RAAF Base Amberley, where I adopted various roles – D servicing – training squadron and avionics sections. Additionally, I was charged with conducting engineering lectures for Pilot Conversions to Sioux, Cessna 180 and Porter types and some lectures to Technical Trades trainees.

During that period, I studied for my Aircraft Maintenance Engineer's Licence and this was issued on 06/01/69. A subsequent appointment as Officer Commanding Maintenance Detachment Oakey Army Aviation Base brought with it a very welcome higher duties allowance commensurate with a Captain's posting.

This was maintained until I resigned my "Commission" on 23/07/70. As an incidental, I also learnt to fly during my stint in the Army and this was with the "Air Academy" at Archerfield Airport.

But my Army career was still not as yet finished as I then served part time in the Army Citizen Military Forces Corps with the RAEME No. 3 Base Workshop at Prahran, VIC. This CMF service commenced on 12/11/71 and continued until 06/02/73 when I transferred to the Reserve of Officers.

Civilian Activities:

Whilst I was with the Army, I did some part-time aircraft work at Toowoomba on GA aircraft and also flew and maintained a DH-82A Tiger Moth that was owned by one of the Army Aviation officers. Suffice of me to say that the time that I spent flying and servicing the Tiger Moth was to have a profound effect on the



Above: Leading the parade at RAAF Amberley, home of the 1st Aviation Regiment, circa 1960—1966.

Member Profile—Patrick John Harrington

direction of my civilian life!

Three days after I resigned from my Regular Army Commission, I commenced employment on the flight staff of Trans Australia Airlines (TAA) as a B-727 Flight Engineer! My Melbourne basing and roster afforded me enough time off to work on various vintage aircraft projects at Berwick, Victoria and this was with a group run by Keith Hatfield.

The DH-85 Leopard Moth (VH-UUL) was being restored during this period. There were some older English men with woodwork and Gipsy engine experience from the 1930's and early 40's who passed on a lot of their expertise, which I gratefully accepted.

In October 1973, I was offered and immediately accepted a transfer back to Brisbane where I retained my position as a B-727 Flight Engineer.

My interest in vintage aircraft was now compelling and I purchased the Auster J5R Alpine (VH-BTI) in November 1973. It was then based at Casey Field, Berwick, Victoria but my desire to fly the aeroplane to Caboolture (the old Morayfield Strip) had to wait until 02/04/74, as that was when my annual leave from TAA fell due.

Rob Macadam accompanied me as he was trying to build his hours for a Commercial Licence. We departed Berwick and landed at Tullamarine Airport, as Rob had to drop off the car. I have a photo of "BTI" parked on TAA Bay 10 at Tullamarine with an Air New Zealand DC-10 in the background.

During this ferry flight, we diverted to Coonabarabran, NSW due to some rough running of

the engine and inexplicably, Rob had declared a PAN to ATC! I thought that this was unnecessary and suffice to say, the whole town turned out with the emergency services.

We changed a spark plug and went on our way after informing Sydney ATC that I was a LAME and the aircraft was serviceable. On arrival at Morayfield, the Auster was hangared and it remained there until 1976 when I purchased a share in a hangar at Redcliffe Aerodrome and moved the Auster there.

QVAG was formed in 1975 by a small number of vintage aeroplane enthusiasts who consisted of like-minded people with a desire to assist with preservation maintenance and restorations! After my attendance at an Oshkosh convention in 1974, it became readily apparent what could be achieved, especially if all the owners and enthusiasts banded together in a common goal!

This included mutual support for the activities and to have dialogue with the Regulator. Members of QVAG were also concerned about the exodus of vintage aircraft and spare parts to overseas interests as this had the potential to constitute the loss of a substantial part of our much cherished aviation heritage.

I was appointed the Founding Chairman and for some time we had dialogue with the Sport Aircraft Association but eventually, we formed QVAG as an autonomous group. We also instituted a maintenance course at the South Brisbane Technical College (Aviation Department) to provide restorers and amateur builders with the necessary ba-

sic skills to undertake their projects.

We also obtained DCA (now CAA) Workshop Approvals for people rebuilding their vintage aircraft so that the restoration could be completed without the need for commercial workshop involvement that in turn, reduced the restorer's expenses substantially.

My visits to Oshkosh (about twelve in total) also included visits to other aviation venues – USAF Museum at Dayton, Ohio – Smithsonian NASM Washington DC and Silver Hills maintenance facility which was undertaking the restoration of the B-29 Superfortress, the "Enola Gay".

On a visit down south, we stayed at the Confederate Air Force facility at Harlingen for a week. Unfortunately, there was no flying being conducted but the maintenance projects were most enlightening.

A visit across the border to Matamoros, Mexico was quite interesting, especially when some kid approached me with a tray of flick knives in the local Cantina "hey gringo you like flick knife \$10 each"; I declined as the US border people may not have approved of my souvenir.

The history of USA also attracted my interest and resulted in my visiting such places as the Alamo – Gettysburg – Franklin Tennessee – Valley Forge PA and Churchill Downs, the home of the Kentucky Derby.

In 1975, I removed "BTI" from service to carry out a major rebuild and incorporate various modifications to the airframe – engine and avionics. As most people know, this project was

Member Profile—Patrick John Harrington

only completed in December 2010 and it will now be flown early this year – but only when the obligatory paperwork is completed.

This revelation may put to rest all the jibes about how long it takes to restore an Auster! In fact, “BTI” was used as a test bed for all manner of modifications that have been used on other Auster projects.

It was moved by road to Cairns and then back to Brisbane during my posting to Cairns by the Airline. This proved to be fortunate as the Redcliffe hangar suffered serious structural damage during a cyclone on 24/12/89 (yes, Brisbane does receive cyclones).

Had “BTI” been in the hangar at that time, then it would have been substantially damaged!

But my spare time had already been devoted to assisting various vintage projects and also, establishing an Auster windscreen-manufacturing project and as a credible supplier of aircraft fabric and dope products.

The Miles Falcon (VH-AAT) had been flown to Redcliffe in late 1973 for repairs and following the completion, in February 1976, I ferry flew “AAT” to Melbourne for the new owner Keith Hatfield who had his base at Casey Field, Berwick, Victoria. Yet another ferry flight followed and this time it was the DH-85 Leopard Moth (VH-UVF). “UVF” was one of two Leopard Moths at Cunnamulla, the other being VH-USK! The DH-85’s had been purchased by Jon Leighton who had intended to rebuild both aircraft.

I left Cunnamulla in “UVF” on 27/04/76 with the destination being the Morayfield Airstrip (Caboolture)! However, due weather, I diverted to the Toogoolawah Airstrip (Watts Bridge) and it wasn’t until 01/05/76 that I was able to complete the flight to Morayfield.

Whereas “USK” was subsequently transported by road, work on the projects languished and eventually, the Challinor Brothers acquired both Leopard Moths! Greg Challinor has since restored VH-USK to airworthy condition and as one would expect, the workmanship and presentation of the aircraft is second to none.

During 1976, Mia and myself visited Arnhem in Holland and this coincided with the filming of “A Bridge Too Far” – it was quite inspiring to see all of those DC-3’s flying over my wife’s hometown. Incidentally, the only Arnhem trams remaining are in an open-air museum as the Germans destroyed all the trams when retreating due to their implementation of a scorched earth policy.

We then flew to London to attend the Farnborough Airshow

and the annual Auster Club Fly-In at Old Warden Airfield. At that time, “Grosvenor House”, the DH-88 Comet (G-ACSS) was being restored by the Shuttleworth Trust on Old Warden Airfield and I was given a piece of the original fabric which I subsequently gave to Graham Orphan on my return home.

During our visit to the RAF Museum, I managed to have a drink and interesting conversation with Bob Stanford-Tuck, an ex-RAF Wing Commander Battle of Britain pilot. An interesting book covering his life story is available through Larry Forrester’s biography.

In 1985, I received a call from Don Williamson of Perth, WA. Don was a retired MacRobertson Miller Airline pilot who informed me that he had purchased a CA-25 Winjeel (VH-WIU - formerly A85-461 with the RAAF).

The machine was hangared at Cairns and he asked if I would consider accompanying him on the ferry flight from Cairns to Serpentine Airfield near Perth. I had been flying Bill McMonagle’s Winjeel (VH-IOX) for some time so whereas I advised him that I



Auster J5R Alpine VH-BTI at Moorabbin, 1960’s.

Member Profile—Patrick John Harrington

could provide some assistance in that area, he mainly needed engineering support for the flight.

He duly arrived in Brisbane and Bill McMonagle put him through the endorsement process and we left for Cairns. The aircraft required some lengthy work to prepare it for the flight, the main problem being the electric fuel booster pump motor which needed to be fully rebuilt – armature rewound etc.

After suitable provisioning with two cartons of NQ Lager and rum (for liquid sustenance - just in case we had an unscheduled landing in a remote area), we finally departed Cairns on 30/08/85 for Normanton, Mount Isa and Tennant Creek where we overnighted.

The next day we set off for Hooker Creek, Lamboo Station, Halls Creek and then Broome (another overnight stopover). Port Hedland and Karratha legs were completed the next day (another overnight stopover).

Throughout this flight, we had been plagued by an engine oil leak and it was during the stop-

over at Karratha that we finally found it and rectified the leak.

Completion of the ferry flight occurred on 02/09/85 as we travelled via Carnarvon and Geraldton before arriving at Serpentine Airfield! Just before our arrival at Serpentine, two RAAF Macchi aircraft formed with us to provide an escort and then, a TV news helicopter joined us. It was quite a media affair and I still have the video of the event!

Thankfully, we had no need to consume the liquid sustenance for the original purpose however, as the ferry flight was “thirsty” work, we consumed those provisions and more during our stopovers!

During regular airline 48-hour stopovers at Darwin, it became a normal procedure to visit Guido Zuccoli and assist with the maintenance certification of his Pitts Special and Tiger Moth aircraft. This was done on a voluntary basis, as it allowed of me to visit his aircraft restoration facility in the suburb of Winnellie and that in itself was always a rewarding experience. He also checked me out in his Harvard at Toowoomba in September

1986.

In June 1987, I flew a PA-18 Super Cub (VH-HCM) to the “Iluka” property near Moree and this was in company with another Super Cub that was being flown by Lang Kidby.

During a flight from the property to Moree to pick-up fuel, on the return journey I had the Deputy Commissioner of NSW Police on board when the top Perspex panel decided to shed itself from the aircraft with an accompanying loud noise and then airframe buffeting. We continued on and landed safely at the property. I had to fly it back to Redcliffe. However, on the way, I encountered rain and cloud, which made it a bit uncomfortable and compounded by unexplained high fuel consumption. I diverted to Gatton Agricultural Airstrip and discovered that fuel was leaking from the gascolator. This was rectified and I proceeded onto Redcliffe.

My “association” with “HCM” continued as in July 1987, I travelled to Port Moresby to bring the machine back from Papua New Guinea. Departing Jackson Field (Port Moresby’s airport), a refuelling stopover was required at Kerema before arriving at Daru Island to overnight. Horn Island, Cairns, Townsville, and Rockhampton were further stopovers before an arrival at Redcliffe.

In June 1988, I flew the L-4A Cub (VH-LFJ) for an appearance at the Brisbane River Sky Show. A delay in flight schedule coupled with my being last in the formation ended up with me landing back at Archerfield Airport in the dark using basic instruments. Later that year, Lang Kidby, John Coutts (a Flight En-



Make-shift hangar at Colona Station, 200 km West of Ceduna, South Australia.

Member Profile—Patrick John Harrington

gineer) and I flew two L-4A Cubs to the Richmond Bicentennial Airshow (October 1988).

Further developments led to the position of Flight Engineers becoming redundant due to the introduction of new technology aircraft and a number of the Flight Engineers were selected for conversion to First Officer Pilot.

We had to complete the necessary training for Commercial and Senior Commercial Pilot Licence in 1987-88 after selection process carried out by the RAAF on behalf of Australian Airlines. This process eliminated a large number of the Flight Engineer applicants but I was fortunate enough to get through and in January 1989, I subsequently received a company transfer back to Cairns and found myself in command of DHC-6 Twin Otters.

It would be timely to discuss the background history of my endeavours to manufacture Auster Perspex panels in Australia. This question always arises when mention is made that the Auster Perspex panels are being



Visit to Atomic Testing Range, Maralinga 1957. Valmai Dutschke (second from left) and June Temme (first white women to visit). Erwin Dutschke (sixth from right) and H. Temme of Yalata staff with Range Commander Durance and other head personnel—British Atomic Testing Team.

manufactured by LP Aero Plastics in the USA.

The initial attempts to manufacture screens by Plastic Products Brisbane commenced in 1975 using fibreglass moulds that I made by using the original panels removed from the aircraft.

This activity was intended for personal use however, it grew to satisfy the needs of a few local Auster owners. I manufactured a collection of other mould types as people became more aware of the venture.

The personnel at Plastic Products were not keen on small product run manufacture as it was difficult and had a high wastage of material. The standard of the panels was only reasonable and we could only continue with the expertise and enthusiasm of one particular plastics worker in the company. Unfortunately, he subsequently passed away in the early 1980's and the company ceased to take any more orders.

I then had to look for an alternative plastic moulding company who would accommodate this process. We made Mk. 5 top canopies at another Brisbane facility by the factory staff and volunteer labour.

Whereas we managed to produce sufficient panels to fulfill the order, yet again there was an excessive consumption of material and this being due to the trial and error methods employed. This company did not have the facilities or expertise to manufacture front windscreens. A number of companies were then canvassed Australia wide to try and find a suitable facility for this manufacturing process. Three other companies made



Mustering sheep, Colona Station, 200 km West of Ceduna, South Australia, using various forms of transport. Pilot—Erwin Dutschke.

Member Profile—Patrick John Harrington

attempts to manufacture the screens (using my moulds at personal expense) however, none achieved a satisfactory result.

At this time, my transfer to Cairns served to set the project back for a considerable period of time.

During my attendance at the 1990 Oshkosh Airshow, I visited LP Aero Plastic's facility in Pennsylvania to assess the potential for manufacture and so gain further knowledge on their techniques. They were responsive to the suggestion for the manufacture of the screens using my moulds but with certain conditions being met - i.e. mould modification to be compatible with their process, manufacturing rights and access to original drawings.

The company was quite sensitive to the legal ramifications of this venture. After I returned from this overseas trip, C. J. Baker (an Auster spares supplier in the UK) called me to ascertain if I could supply them with Auster Perspex panels. He



Father Christmas arrives at Yalata Mission, South Australia 24th December 1957. Pilot—Erwin Dutschke.

then advised that the original factory moulds were destroyed in a factory fire years earlier. I could only advise him that the manufacture process was still in limbo.

Aviation Plastics in Dandenong, Victoria was advertising the manufacture of aircraft Perspex so I flew down from Cairns to inspect their facility and assess the prospects for the Auster panel manufacture at their facility.

Their facility was still in the embryo stage but the product they

were producing was of a good standard and the technique was similar to LP Aero in the USA. I then decided to commit the process to Aviation Plastics in the interest and convenience of keeping the operation in Australia.

The moulds were duly dispatched to Dandenong along with a letter of agreement. I accepted assistance from members of the Antique Aeroplane Association of Australia and in particular, Mr. Peter Bernadi (President), Mr. Bill Baker (Auster Representative) and Mr. Tony James.

Aviation Plastics called me after 5-6 months had elapsed to advise that the parent company was in the hands of the receivers and that the moulds were impounded as company assets. They had not produced any panels at that stage and as expected, a legal situation ensued. This had to be resolved which turned into quite a complicated process as I was forced to progress matters by "remote control" from Cairns. In the end, I had to travel from Cairns and physically retrieve the items from the Company's Receivers.

Natives See Santa Claus For The First Time

By A Staff Reporter

For 300 natives of the Ooldean tribe at Yalata Mission Station, 125 miles west of Ceduna, Christmas Day was a wonderful occasion.

More than half of them had never seen Father Christmas, and when he arrived in an Auster aircraft, excited jabbering broke out among them and continued well after his departure. None of them had expected him to arrive by plane.

Excitement was intense when the plane carrying Father Christmas, who waved from the windows, flew low over the mission. After the aircraft landed it was surrounded by 300 excited natives—adults and children.

As Father Christmas alighted with his large collection of presents, the children's eyes almost bulged out of their sockets.

The part of Father Christmas, or "Christmas Father" as the children called him, was played by Pastor H. Temme, principal of Concordia College, Toowoomba, Queensland, whose son is Pastor H. Temme, superintendent of the mission.

The plane was flown by its owner, Mr. Erwin Dutschke, manager of Colona sheep station, which forms part of the 1,728-square-mile mission station.

Biscuits, clothing, cigarettes, tobacco, toys, sweets, tinned fish, pocket knives, and puddings were distributed to the natives.

The new clothing was given by the Aborigines Protection Board.

Lutheran Church organizations and Station 5 AD Kangaroo Club provided the presents.

The natives later attended an open-air film evening.

Pastor Temme said yesterday the mission's best Christmas box was the 280 points of rain which fell on Christmas Eve and replenished the almost empty water tanks.

Country News

Adelaide Advertiser, 28th December 1957.

Member Profile—Patrick John Harrington

Arrangements were made for transportation and temporary storage until a decision could be made about further alternatives. I then decided to transport all of the moulds direct to LP Aero Plastics in the USA.

Six moulds were shipped direct from Dandenong and a further four moulds that were also in storage, were shipped from Brisbane at a total cost of \$3000. I was really becoming weary of all this unproductive time and expense being consumed. I was now totally locked into the project and had to see it to the illogical conclusion, successful or not!

By that time, I had converted to First Officer on Dash 8 aircraft and this was prior to being transferred by the Company yet again. I moved to Melbourne in July 1992 and underwent another conversion course to become a First Officer on the B-737. During the time that I spent in Melbourne, I became involved with Ted Rudge's DH-104 Dove maintenance operation and also, had the opportunity to fly his Stearman.

When the moulds arrived at LP Aero Plastics in the USA, they quoted USD \$1000 each for the front mould to be set-up for their process and the smaller top moulds would be around USD \$350 each. The issues of the engineering drawings and manufacturing rights then had to be addressed.

I discovered that the manufacturing rights belonged to Mr. Stephen Saywell of Saywell Aviation in the UK. He agreed to give the approval to manufacture with the provision that his company could market the product world wide with the exception of the Australian region.

The engineering drawings were tracked down to Mr. Ron Neal, an ex-Auster factory employee and Technical Officer for the International Auster Club in the UK. He duly supplied the drawings to LP Aero Plastics in USA and they proceeded to manufacture an initial run that was quite satisfactory. I have not received any reports of incorrect dimensions or quality of the LP Aero product.

The only hiccup was the misplaced side vent holes in a front screen that we replaced. We are not having the vent holes cut at the factory to avoid mistakes. The customer can cut the holes from the original panel as required. I do hope this small story answers all those searching comments that I receive when the subject of Auster Perspex panels is introduced.

On 01/06/95, I received a company transfer back to Brisbane as a B-737 First Officer (QANTAS had by then, taken over Australian Airlines) and I subsequently retired medically from QANTAS Airlines on 03/04/98. I had served in the airlines for 28 years with the logging of 8000 hours as Flight Engineer on B-727s and 7000 hours as Pilot on B-737 aircraft respectively! Other types included the venerable Twin Otter and the Dash 8!

In 1998, we embarked on a two-month trip to the UK, Ireland and Europe. We managed to attend the Farnborough Airshow, Duxford plus many non-aviation venues - i.e. a tour of Buckingham Palace, the Grenadier Guards Museum and Churchill's Underground War Rooms.



Geelong, September 1961. New owners C. Johnson (City Engineer, Shepparton, Victoria), Murray Sidebottom, John Chandler.



Shepparton, Victoria 1961.

Member Profile—Patrick John Harrington

We then had a month bus tour of Europe and on our arrival back at Calais, we hired a car and drove to Berlin, which was a two-day drive. Prior to setting off for Berlin, we visited the WW1 battlefields to find the grave of my uncle and also to see Dunkirk!

Approximately 27 kilometres East of Dunkirk, there is an interesting museum called "Bunker Eperlecques" which has 5 metre thick walls and was used for storage of liquid oxygen and launching of the V-1 rocket assaults on England. Planned use of the facility for V-2 rockets was thwarted by Allied bombing. We had quite a good look around Berlin with particular focus on the WW2 history and the Berlin Wall. The red coloured tiles in the Underground station nearest the location of the Reich Chancellery were in fact taken out of the Reich Chancellery building and re-laid in the station as a final gesture of retribution. I would like to revisit this part of the world as it is steeped in history!

I was faced now with the task of completing the Auster rebuild



De Havilland Canada DHC-6 Twin Otter (VH-TGG). Photo—Craig P. Justo.

even though I did not have a medical to hold a Pilot's Licence due to upper spinal problems. With great trepidation, I built a hangar at Redcliffe Aerodrome (I still owned the ¼ share of hangar for Auster storage) to embark on an aircraft maintenance and engineering business to cater for all aircraft - but specialising in vintage aeroplane types. Hence the business is titled as "Vintage Aeroplane Services".

The CASA approval for the

workshop was issued in 2000 with the same approval number that I had maintained for the Auster rebuild back in 1975, hence the low CASA Aircraft Maintenance Certificate of Approval # 3116, LAME Q8116. Instrument Of Appointment, CASA Certificate of Airworthiness Delegate. Recreation Aviation Australia Level 4 Inspector – Certificate of Airworthiness Authority.

Well I thought my priority was to start on my Auster project but that was not to be as work started to arrive. The first Auster to get the restoration treatment was VH-SNI, a Mk. 3 owned by George Law of Melbourne whom I had grown up with and served together in the Air Training Corps. His Auster restoration was taking as long as mine was so it was decided to move his project up to Redcliffe and we would fast track it to completion.

Rob Scott an ex Motor mechanic who was studying for his LAME qualification started work for me and began working on "SNI" with



De Havilland Canada Dash 8 (VH-FNQ). Photo—Craig P. Justo.

Member Profile—Patrick John Harrington

gusto. It was eventually completed and George flew it back to Melbourne where it now resides at Mangalore and is actively flown.

We then planned to start my Auster rebuild but another Auster J5G (VH-JSG) with Lycoming 180 HP engine turned up in complete disarray from Rockhampton with the new owner begging me to start on his restoration. So once again, my Auster went back in the queue. This rebuild proved to be a marathon but was eventually completed with the efforts of Trevor Phillips who is the volunteer Auster specialist.

During that time, I had received treatment for the previously mentioned condition and I managed to pass a Class 2 Private Pilot medical!

Now it was definitely the time to commence the restoration of "BTI" with no interruption. I had various people volunteer for the project – Bill McMonagle – John Coutts – and numerous other people with Trevor Phillips at the helm. The modifications to "BTI" were expanded upon as some of those ideas had been incorporated in the other restorations.

The original owner of the Auster Alpine was Erwin Dutschke of Colona Station, 200 kilometres West of Ceduna in SA who had purchased the aircraft new in 1956. He and his family have been to inspect the Auster in the last 12 months to view the restoration and are looking forward to it visiting Adelaide (their hometown) to re-acquaint themselves with the aircraft.

Erwin Dutschke had in 1961, sold "BTI" to a group in Geelong, Victoria. We had no idea of the original paint scheme and colour



Patrick John Harrington—August 2003. Photo—Craig P. Justo.

of the aircraft under his ownership and as it transpired, we painted it in virtually the same colours and scheme – makes one wonder about the power of the psychic!

In the meantime, we had also carried out some restoration work on an Auster MK. 5 (VH-ABA) following a bird strike that damaged the propeller and subsequent forced landing on the Darling Downs. And let me state unequivocally, there is no truth in the rumour that the errant bird struck the propeller from a rearward direction!!!!

Bill Chalmers (aka the Snake) and myself have a volunteer involvement with the QANTAS Founders Museum in Longreach, Queensland and have thus carried out restoration work there on a few occasions. Given our association with the Museum, they now want us to travel to Thailand to repair the wing fabric behind the engine bays on their PBY-6A Catalina that is currently unserviceable!

During the ferry flight from Spain to Australia, on 14/10/09, the Catalina (VH-EAX) was forced

to divert to the U-Tapao Airbase near Rayong, Thailand after engine failure! It has remained stranded there for the past fifteen months as attempts to rectify the problems remain unresolved!

Well, there are many other minor stories along the way but way too many for me to include in this article and possibly, run the risk of sending the readers to sleep! I still have an abiding interest in the QVAG and look forward to attending the Festival of Flight each year and especially, catching up with some of the original members from the 1970's.

It was at the request of Jackie Bolsover that this article was produced as I feel that my personal history would not be that colourful and quite bland.

© PATRICK J HARRINGTON -
JANUARY 2011



Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield —A Brief History

Perhaps it is a timely occasion for us to look back and remember how the airfield came in to being and also, how both the airfield and QVAG / AFM Inc. are intertwined.

Did you know that as early as 1931, there had been a semi-official Landing Ground at Toogoolawah? It was located one mile east of the township. In December 1940, the Director of Civil Aviation asked the Secretary, Department of Air, to consider providing an Emergency Landing Ground at Toogoolawah. It had been suggested that it could be used in an emergency on the Brisbane - Kangaroo route and might be useful for the training of pilots under the Empire Air Training Scheme (EATS) when carrying out cross-country flights. However, the Department of Air advised in a letter dated January 1941, that Toogoolawah was not at that time required by the RAAF or Defence.

During May and June 1942, the Australian Army began pressing for construction of airstrips at Toogoolawah for use by the Army Co-operation Squadron. Toogoolawah as a site was considered to be superior to Toowoomba. The original site, just outside of town was rejected as it was subject to flooding during the wet season. An alternative was selected and inspected and although not entirely satisfactory, it appeared to be the best available.

The new area was approximately four miles to the east of the original and located between the Brisbane and Mt Beppo Roads. Colonel Bleachmore was advised after the inspection that work on the new site would commence the following Mon-



Above: "The Bridge" as it is today. Photo—Bob Livingstone.

day and Mr. Calder had been placed in charge of arrangements. The project at this stage was entirely an Army one with Pilot Officer Keays assisting only with locating the site and arranging the layout. Some 650 acres of farming and grazing land was acquired, which was requisitioned under the provisions of the National Security (General) Regulations.

By mid-August 1942, the work was 95% complete and had cost approximately 4,000 pounds. Preparation had included clearing, grading and consolidation of two runways of 5,000 ft, and 4,000 ft, (1,524 metres and 1,220 metres) respectively and

also deviations of road and telephone lines. The 'Drome' was now considered suitable to receive aircraft up to P-40 Kittyhawk size.

Approval for a soil/cement runway for the 32 runway came through in October 1942. After a soil survey this decision was reversed to the 12 runway in December. At this same time, Lt Colonel Brinney advised that it was proposed to establish a Home Base Aerodrome for No. 5 Army Co-Operation Squadron at Toogoolawah. The idea of a soil/cement Runway was abandoned in mid 1943 and replaced with the plan for both runways to be grass over a gravel base.



Above: The first hangar erected at Watts Bridge, by partners Peter Woodruff, John Sinclair and Ross Stenhouse.

Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield —A Brief History

In the latter stages of 1942, 100,000 pounds became available through the US 149 project and this provided funding for construction of a parent 'Drome' at Toogoolawah together with aircraft dispersal facilities including a dispersal area or separate Landing Ground if necessary. A camp was designed to accommodate up to 300 personnel. At one stage it was planned to locate a RAAF Repair and Salvage Unit on the airfield. However, those plans did not eventuate, mainly because of the northward movement of the war and the continued use of Lowood and Cecil Plains Airfields some 30 miles and 100 miles distant respectively.

However, in November 1942, the RAAF's No. 5 Army Co-Operation Squadron relocated from Toowoomba Airport to Toogoolawah Airstrip. Several of the Squadron's Wirraway and Tiger Moth aircraft were based there until February/March 1943 at which time they moved to Kingaroy. During No. 5 Squadron's tenure at Toogoolawah Airstrip, Wirraways and Tiger Moths were based there at various times. It has been ascertained that some of the Wirraways were as follows: A20-143 / "491" / "285" / "286" / "289" / "449" / "512" / "513" / "514" / "517" / "537" / "538" and "549" and that the Tiger Moths were: A17-285 / "488" / "601" / "603" / "611" / "616" and "617".

But the capacity for Toogoolawah Airfield to handle larger aircraft had already been tested as just after the runways were established, a USAAF B-24 Liberator bomber made an emergency landing at the airfield. Having encountered inclement weather and with its fuel close to exhaustion, the crew chose to land and

the airfield's runway proved to be more than adequate to accommodate the aircraft.

On 17 September 1943, a RAAF DH-84 Dragon (A34-19) of the RAAF's No. 2 Aerial Ambulance Unit crashed at Toogoolawah Airstrip. It is reported to have struck a tree before impacting the airfield and regrettably, the pilot, Pilot Officer A.F. Thorley was fatally injured in the accident. The passenger on board at the time, Flight Sergeant Newton of No. 3 Initial Training School was severely injured but following treatment in Brisbane, he recovered fully from those injuries. The entrance road to Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield is named Thorley Drive in his honour.

By January 1944, the application of the gravel base to both runways was 50% completed with some 16,400 cubic yards laid from a stock of 33,000 cubic yards. Underground drains were

20% finished and open drains 60% completed. Fencing had been completed and the total cost ran to 29,200 pounds. The airfield then appears to have been virtually abandoned until the end of the war, except for occasional visits by No. 14 Base unit from nearby Lowood.

Post-war the site was leased by the Dept of Civil Aviation on a monthly tenancy basis with an annual rental of 312 pounds.

Astute readers might have noted the use of the term "home base" in the above article, this is the origin of the term Home Base Groups now used by WBMA.

How did we get to where we are today?

The airfield never completely stopped being used as an airfield. In the 1970's, the then



Above: This photo was taken in 1943 and shows that the runways are starting to gain grass cover. Also visible are the gravel pits from which the airfield was constructed. Clearly visible on the left hand side of the photo is the diversion road that was constructed to replace Silverleaves Road (the road that intersects the main runway).

Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield —A Brief History

landowner, Brian Beltz had a Cessna C172 based at the airfield. One of our founding Life Members, Pat Harrington, remembers that in the same period he was ferrying a DH-85 Leopard Moth to the old Caboolture Airstrip (Morayfield) from out west and was unable to make it over the range.

He diverted to Watts Bridge and landed there. Brian Beltz allowed him to put his aeroplane into a fenced-off area where he kept his Cessna. There was also a glider club conducting operations at the airfield in the early 1970's and various ag aircraft operated from the airfield whilst conducting operations in the local area.

This continuing use of the airfield had exercised a strong influence on the Esk Shire Council and it was obviously a vital factor in its decision to issue its first consent approval for the development of the airfield.

When Wivenhoe Dam was constructed, the government of the time resumed more land than was finally required and subsequently, the surplus land was

sold back to the original landowners - if they wanted it. The dam flooded a lot of the fertile river flats and as a consequence, severely affected the economic viability of the Esk Shire. To compensate and offset this loss, the State Government came up with the Lake Wivenhoe Recreational Management Plan.

This plan originally consisted of 38 recreational reserves and each one had a budget to finance its development. During the very final stages of the preparation an additional reserve was added - the Watts Bridge reserve, however this reserve had no budget for its development.

On 5th March 1983, Mr D. J. Mackintosh (Senior) wrote a letter to the Coordinator General in the Premier's Department applying for a permanent lease over the airfield. This is the first written record of action being taken to re-establish the airfield.

D. J. Mackintosh (Don) had been visiting his son's newly purchased property on Silverleaves Rd and whilst looking

around the area, Don noticed the remains of the airfield. Don decided that the airfield would make a good home for vintage, sport and recreational aviation in Queensland.

The early 1980's were during the time of the Joh Bjelke-Petersen days of Government and to some extent, we owe the existence of the airfield to Joh's very active interest in aviation. Joh's personal pilot (Ms Beryl Young) told Ross Stenhouse that she once landed the Queensland Government aeroplane at the airfield with Joh on board. In the late 1980's Joh confirmed to Ross Stenhouse that he had known about the re-activation of the airfield and had supported the concept.

A very early policy decision taken by the Watts Bridge Airfield Steering Committee was to develop the airfield as a "showpiece" and always maintain it to a very high standard even when funds for things like mowing the grass were non-existent. This early attitude of having the airfield maintained and developed as a "showpiece" has inculcated those on the various Management Committees and Boards since.

A task that was particularly challenging for the Steering Committee was the formation of a cohesive association, (what is now the Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield Inc.) so that people could join and participate in the development of the airfield.

How does all this relate to QVAG / AFM Inc.?

Many QVAG / AFM Inc. members were at the forefront of the work that was undertaken to re-establish Watts Bridge Memorial



Above: Air Chalet #1. The site was originally leased to Ted Seymour in 1999. He subsequently sold it to Ed de Laat, who constructed the Air Chalet and the interior fit-out raised the standard of accommodation available on the airfield.

Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield —A Brief History

Airfield. In fact, there are too many to try and list in this article and unfortunately, someone would get missed. Without these members' foresight and perseverance, it is probably fair to say that the airfield as we know it today would not exist.

QVAG was founded in 1975 in Brisbane (Queensland, Australia) as a state-based group. However, the organisation has since evolved into one of Australia's foremost vintage, contemporary classic and Warbird aviation organisations. In 1987 QVAG/AFM Inc. became an Incorporated Association. We were the first Home Base Group on the airfield.

Our clubhouse was the first clubhouse on the airfield and it has good provenance in keeping with the historical objectives of our Group.

The building originally started life at Archerfield Airport in Brisbane during WW2 when it was constructed for the RAAF. Identified as Building 25, after the war it was used by the RAAF's No. 23 "City of Brisbane" Squadron.

At a later point, it was removed from Archerfield and relocated to



Above: Removal of the Clubhouse from its Willawong site.

Willawong, Brisbane and used as a residential dwelling for an unknown period of time. Eventually, the building had to be removed from the Willawong site and this was to be effected by Atlas House Removals.

Contact was made with that company and they agreed to donate the house and the costs of its relocation to Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield. Furthermore, they were prepared to re-stump the building for a cost of \$7,500. A commendable gesture and one that further cemented the foundations of QVAG / AFM Inc.

QVAG / AFM Inc's clubhouse

stood as a solitary structure for many years, however in recent years it has been complemented by the construction of clubhouses for the Australian Aerobatics (Queensland Chapter) and Queensland Ultralight Association respectively!

With three clubhouses in close proximity to each other, this has created a precinct for Home Based Groups to offer services to their respective members and when necessary, support each other's activities!

Well, that is your history lesson for today and as Members of QVAG / AFM Inc., we can but hope that this is of some enlightenment and interest to you. The airfield was re-established to cater to all facets of recreational aviation and through a lot of hard work over many years, it has been developed into a world class facility!

Through QVAG / AFM Inc's staging of quality events at "The Bridge" and the ensuing publicity that has been gained through the exposure in some of the world's most respected aviation journals and other forms of me-



Above: Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority training conducted recently at Watts Bridge.

Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield —A Brief History

dia, "The Bridge" is now recognized in international aviation circles! It has rightfully earned a reputation for being a "user-friendly" airfield that provides aviators and aviation enthusiasts alike with a venue that allows them to pursue their interests in a hospitable, genial and relaxed atmosphere.

As you may have noticed, QVAG / AFM Inc. is a long term stakeholder in "The Bridge" and we, as a group, will continue to support the airfield's Board of Management in its efforts to maintain and develop this facility into the future.

If you look back in time and then look at "The Bridge" today, it can

be said with some conviction, that the effort that went into re-establishing the airfield has been a worthwhile exercise! Long may it remain as the place where like-minded folk can gather and enjoy their common interests and aviation at its best!

**Ross Stenhouse and
Jackie Bolsover.**

Tiger Moth Project for Sale—VH-BJI

Original airframe logs to 1948. All the hard to get bits are there. Engine is core value only (no logs). Fuse restoration well underway. This is a great project for someone fortunate to have more time on their hands than me!

Asking Price: \$25,000. Phone Ron Ennis 0414 883 864 for more details



Calendar of Events 2011

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Start</u>	<u>Airfield</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Activity</u>
Breakfast fly-in with spot-landing competition	February 27	0800	Watts Bridge	Craig Justo 0407 740734	A fun breakfast fly-in to test your landing skills!
Bange's Fly-In	March 13	0800	Clifton Airfield (Bange's)	Trevor Bange 0429 378370 or 4695 8541 (a/hrs)	Darling Downs Sport Aircraft Association Inc. Annual Clifton Fly-In. This fly-in has become a premier attraction for types of aviation in southern Queensland.
Easter Bilby Fly-In	April 17	1200	Watts Bridge	Craig Justo 0407 740734	Search for the Easter Bilby and have some lunch!
David Hack Classic Meet	May 1	0900	Toowoomba	Scott Williamson 0427 332192 or e-mail skwilliamson@gotalk.net.au	Wings and Wheels of Yesteryear is the theme. Celebrating 100 years of aviation and motoring on the Darling Downs. Website http://www.rotarydavidhack.org/classicmeet.php
Wings of Life Around Australia launch	June 25	0700	Watts Bridge	Craig Justo 0407 740734	Wings of Life Around Australia Flight in support of RFDS. Breakfast fly-in.
Festival of Flight 2011	August 27—28		Watts Bridge	Craig Justo 0407 740734	Annual QVAG showcase.
"Octoberfest" Breakfast Fly-In	October 16	0800	Watts Bridge	Craig Justo 0407 740734	
QVAG/AFM Inc. Christmas Party	December 3	1800 onwards	Watts Bridge	Jackie Bolsover	

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