

Australian Vintage Aeroplane News

Well I am still the pro tem editor. If you have the skills and enthusiasm to take on the task as AVAN editor please contact me at president@qvag.org

Avro Avian VH-AUFZ – Collated by Ross Stenhouse

Looking back through my collection of photos, I came across an old photo of Avian G-AUFZ (immediately below) and was prompted to do a literature review on the internet to see what I could find out about the aeroplane. This aeroplane has many connections with Queensland and worthy of a story in this journal.



For many years G-AUFZ was Australia's oldest registered flying aeroplane. Originally build with serial number R3/AV/127 in 1st December 1927, it was an Avro 594 Avian Mk. II with an 84hp Cirrus II engine. It had been ordered with an 80 hp AS Genet radial, but actually supplied with a Cirrus II of the same power. After

being test flown by Bert Hinkler, it was crated and shipped to Australia and was shipped to Australia with sister a/c C-AUFY (VH-UFY) arriving early in 1928.



Upon its arrival, Captain F.C.R. Jaques, a WW1 Royal Flying Corps pilot who owned the Australian Avro franchise, took his new aeroplane out of its box in Adelaide. Jaques was trading as Wings Ltd at Broken Hill; NSW in 1928. Jaques was himself a pioneer of Australian Aviation and

up until 1931, used the Avro for demonstrations, barnstorming and instruction. The depression forced Jaques to liquidate Wings, Ltd and both -UFY and -UFZ were transferred to G. Matheson of Parachilna, South Australia, who was a partner in Wings, Ltd. Matheson, in fact, traded under the

Australian Vintage Aeroplane News



name Jaques Flying Services and operated out of Parafield. Matheson also purchased the sister ship C-AUFY.

Over the years, two significant improvements were made to G-AUFZ (changed to VH-UFZ in 1930). As a Mk. II it had weaker landing gear and subsequently in 1931 was

converted to a Mk IV by strengthening the landing gear and wing root areas. After various changes of owner, it had its last C of A renewal in March 1944 registered to W.H.Kenny. It was struck off charge in 1947 and languished at Archerfield, being recovered from a dump there around May 1980 by Alan Lewis of Packington NSW, who was having it rebuilt by Bob Pope in Brisbane (Bob used to be a QVAG member in the 1970's/1980's.)

Unfortunately it suffered some damage by vandals before passing to Lang Kidby (QVAG life member) as a 'basket case' for A\$35,000¹.



Lang restored the bits and pieces around a Gipsy II engine. First flight after restoration was in April 1998.

The photo to the left shows the restored fuselage at Caboolture Airfield prior to the engine installation.



Two former QVAG members Roger Marks² and Graham Potts assisted Lang with different aspects of the project along with another Brisbane person Robert Dunlop. One of the parts Roger made was the ailerons Roger and his contribution shown in photos immediately left..

¹ Early History of G-AUFZ <http://www.edcoatescollection.com/ac1/austu/vhufz.html>

² Roger Marks <http://www.qaww2.com/avian-project.html>

Australian Vintage Aeroplane News



ÚAZ was then airfreighted to Amsterdam in a Cathay 747, and after re-assembly flown from Schipol to Manston on 30 May 1998. The following day, the aeroplane was flown to Woodford. It was based at Woodford (to the delight of the Avro Heritage Centre) until the re-enactment³ of Bert Hinkler's solo epic in September 1998.

During the 1999 Avalon Air Show Kidby sold the Avian to Greg Herrick⁴ of Minneapolis Greg had the aircraft shipped to the US to be part of his "Golden Wings Flying Museum".



Greg then then organized the Amelia Earhart⁵ commemorative flight across the USA (they were stuck for a week following 9/11 when all flights were banned), with Carlene Mendita⁶ as the pilot.

Lang, who had accompanied the Avian, advises that he checked out Carlene on the aircraft in California before the flight. Not

only was Carlene a "natural" flyer, but she even resembled Amelia to some degree!

This flight was to re-enact Earhart's effort in the Avian NC7803 (ex G-EBUG) in late 1928. Anyway, Greg still owns the Moth (registered N7083) and flies it regularly to air shows.

³ Kidby Re-enactment Flight

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Solo_England_Australia_Reenactment_in_1998_02.jpg

⁴ Golden Wings Flying Museum <http://www.goldenwingsmuseum.com/owner/owner.htm>

⁵ Amelia Earhart – early life <http://www.biography.com/people/amelia-earhart-9283280#early-life>

⁶ Flight across America <http://www.avweb.com/news/skywrite/181825-1.html>

Australian Vintage Aeroplane News

It's a shame that this aeroplane ended up in the USA, however if that had to be, then Greg Herrick⁷ appears to have a great attitude to vintage aeroplanes and flying them. Greg claims in the video that G-EBUG (actually G-AUFZ/VH-UFZ) is the only flyable Avian in the world.

In summary, the work done by Queenslanders on the restoration of the Avian is as follows:

- Roger Marks constructed the seat rails / control mounts (which are nothing like a Moth's – open and much simpler) and ailerons sans tips, sans fittings
- Robert Dunlop constructed the basic wing structure sans tips, sans root ribs, sans fittings
- Stuart Parry constructed the tailplane structure
- Hub Jones fettled and fabricated the metal fittings
- Ben Thielen fabricated cowlings
- Warwick Woinarski and Lang Kidby doped / painted the entire machine
- Graham Potts completed the partially built fuselage, ditto wings, ailerons, tail surfaces and interior, constructed upper centre section (radically different from dH units) assembled and fitted out the whole thing, fitted out the cockpits, installed control cables, etc., covered the fuselage with Lang, covered the flying and control surfaces with a number of others who appeared at that time, did much of the rib stitching, etc., etc..
- Bert Persson signed off the work under Sandora Aviation's workshop approval

This Avian really is a Australian Aeroplane with a close Queensland connection, shame its not here!

oOo

Boonah Fly-in - 23-25th April 2016 (NOT a QVAG Organised Event.)

The pre-publicity forecast that the fly-in would be:

"Looking like a full weekend, with a cross-country event planned to Clifton on the Saturday, and then another to Caboolture on the Sunday, to join in their Vintage Aircraft celebrations. Of course there will be the notorious band around the campfire on the Saturday, and the visit to the local, "The Dugie", on the other nights. There will also be the ANZAC fly-over on Monday morning if you wish to join us, but if you already have commitments elsewhere, feel free to depart for them at any point."

This was looking like it would a great event organised by member Bill Finlen supported by the folks at Boonah. I had planned to attend the first day of the 3-day event, the Saturday for a great day's photography and a chance to catch up with old friends.

The organising committee had sent out an invitation with an RSVP to vintage aeroplane owners, unfortunately insufficient acceptances were received and the difficult decision was made to cancel the fly-in.

Bill only received a couple of RSVP's and once he sent out the email cancelling the event he received a number of phone calls saying "we will come anyhow – just have a regular fly-in." These phone calls led to decision being made to have a much smaller event.

⁷Greg Herrick Video "The Collector" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UjycRkZ1TWA>

Australian Vintage Aeroplane News

Bill was disappointed that the original form of the fly-in was not to be, but a smaller event was a reasonable comprise.

However as fate would have it the weather forecast for the weekend was for strong gusty winds. The forecast for the Sunday were:

AMBERLEY YAMB

TAF YAMB 232242Z 2400/2418
17014G25KT CAVOK
FM240800 15010KT CAVOK
RMK FM240000 MOD TURB BLW 5000FT TILL241800
T 25 26 24 21 Q 1020 1018 1019 1022

ARCHERFIELD YBAF

TAF YBAF 232235Z 2400/2412
16016G28KT CAVOK
FM240800 17013KT CAVOK
RMK FM240000 MOD TURB BLW 5000FT TILL241200
T 25 27 25 21 Q 1020 1018 1019 1022

BRISBANE YBBN

TAF YBBN 232355Z 2400/2506
16017G28KT 9999 FEW035
FM240800 16013KT 9999 FEW030
FM242300 15017G28KT 9999 FEW035
RMK FM240000 MOD TURB BLW 5000FT TILL250600
T 25 25 24 21 Q 1020 1019 1019 1022

Tail draggers are not well known for their cross wind landing characterises being all that great so the windy conditions put many off. The Boonah airfield's reputation for gusty crosswinds thrown into that mix didn't help either. Bill Finlen flew both his Tiger Moth and Leopard Moth and I was fortunate enough to score a ride in the Leopard – what a thrill to ride in such a rare aeroplane!

The end result was no aeroplanes flew in although a couple of people drove in. A party was held on the Saturday night and this turned out to be a great success – nowhere as big as had been planned but about 20 folks in attendance meant that a greater opportunity existed to talk and get to know people – the fly-in was rescued!

Please let me get on my soapbox - To me this highlighted a problem that has long-plagued people organising events and that is, people not rending in an RSVP when requested. Not knowing the numbers that will be attending puts pressure on the organisers especially if the event involves a lot of catering. The problem can become greater if you do take the gamble and the weather turns sour. It can and often does become a very expensive gamble. The message I want to convey is simply a request "Please give an RSVP – Are you going or not – It's not a lot to ask." Receiving the RSVP gives

Australian Vintage Aeroplane News

good feedback. A good response can inspire the organisers to make a greater effort and the result can be an even better event.

Photo Tips - Camera Angle – Get Low

I thought I would pass on a camera tip that I learnt at last year's Boonah 2015 fly-in. I don't recall the name of the gentleman, who told me, save to say he is well published in aviation journals.



The two photos below are of Bill Finlen's Tiger Moth VH-UYV. The upper photo was taken with the camera at ground level. I feel that you get a much better (and often dramatic) view of the aeroplanes when you use this low camera angle.

The second photo (below) was taken from a similar position but taken standing up.



In this photo the aeroplane gets lost in the foreground clutter.

When compared to the photo above it almost looks like I was standing on a ladder.

Being an old codger these days means that

I find it far more difficult that a younger person would to get down to take the low camera shot, however I believe the result is well worth the effort and it does greatly improve the photo.

Australian Vintage Aeroplane News

Sad News – Death of a Notable Australian – Pat Toole.



Very recently I was told by member Jon Innis that QVAG Life Member, Pat Toole had died after a fall.

Pat first came to my attention when former long-time QVAG President, Shane Winter introduced me to Pat a number of years back at a QVAG Festival of Flight at Watts Bridge circa 2008.

I didn't take a lot of notice at that first meeting; I didn't realise what a notable Australian I was being introduced to and I didn't realize that our paths would cross again in a significant way.

Subsequently to Shane's tragic death, I purchased his Auster J5 VH-KSK from his estate. This was when my connection with Pat really started.

Pat Graham (Toole) was the first woman commercial pilot to be employed in PNG. She flew with Gibbs Sepik Airways (see <http://www.qvag.org/GibbesSepikAirways.html> for information on Bobby Gibbs – another notable Australian Aviator)).

Whilst working for Gibbs Sepik Airways Pat had the misfortune to have to put VH-KSK down due to rapidly deteriorating weather. She was in very remote country and spent five days living in KSK until she was rescued. Fortunately Pat gave a presentation to QVAG which I videoed and that is now on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1K6jpmGhFg8>).



Australian Vintage Aeroplane News

As can be seen in the frame-grab from that video on the left hand side of the photo is Auster VH-KSK looking quite sad after the landing.

I often wonder who has flown my aeroplanes but never thought they would be such an interesting people (Pat Toole – Bobby Gibbs).

I will miss you Pat, you were an inspiration to many and your actions in PNG were a once-off.

Pat had a deep respect for the little Auster J5 VH-KSK and even in death there is an ongoing connection. Pat has left detailed instructions on how her death is to be handled and part of those instructions include that her body is to be cremated and that her ashes are to be held by one of the relatives until VH-KSK is back in the air. Pat's ashes are to be dropped out of KSK over Watts Bridge.

Please watch the YouTube video for Pat's exploits in PNG. The web page on Gibbs Sepik Airways is worth a read as well.

Vale Pat Toole!

New Air Chalet at Watts Bridge

A new air chalet is being constructed at Watts Bridge. I think that because Watts Bridge is now privately owned by the members of Watts Bridge Memorial Association Inc. this makes the airfield a great and safe place to invest in a hangar or an Air Chalet. This will be the 20th Air Chalet to be built.



Australian Vintage Aeroplane News

Disclaimer: All views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of the author, the editor or the Queensland Vintage Aeroplane Group Australian Flying Museum Inc. They are simply opinions and are not necessarily fact.