

Queensland Ultralight Association

February 2005 NEWSLETTER

Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield, Silverleaves Road, via Toogoolawah Qld

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The Good Old Days

When I was a youth I had a dream, I wanted to own a small aircraft that would simply fly safe, and have lots of adventures. Now many years later that's just what I am doing.

In the early days of ultralighting in Australia most aviators were flying Ron Wheelen Scouts and I was no exception. Before I bought my first plane I would go to all the fly-ins and ask heaps of questions, because when I purchased my first plane, I wanted one that would suit the type of flying I wanted to do.

The real early Scouts were powered by a 8 HP Pixie motor which was a victor lawn mower engine, and the propeller was driven by a chain which flew off at regular intervals. One of the early flyer's was a gentleman by the name of Pat Dougherty who liked to fly his Scout off the water on floats, because if anything went wrong he always had an airstrip in front of him and things went wrong regularly.

Pat called his plane Kaplonk, he would tell me how he would be flying low across the water and hear kaplonk, and realizing the chain had flew off and landed in the water.



Bert Percell and his beloved Bantam

Because things would go wrong at regular intervals the early ultralights were happy flying at fifty foot off the ground, when I came along and bought my first Scout, I considered myself a modern Scouter because I felt happier at two thousand feet above the ground.

I paid \$3,200 for my first scout, it came in a long narrow box in a hundred pieces, and boy was I the proudest man in the street, at this point in my life I had never assembled an aircraft. I figured it couldn't be too hard, besides I had seen heaps of Scouts and it looked simple enough.

I had a horse training business at the time and was very busy showing horses all over the country, so my wife insisted I didn't put it together until the end of the horse showing season which was around October, and that was two months away.

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Photo credits Bert Percell

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SECRETARY: *Malcolm McKenzie 0414723049*

TREASURER: RICHARD FAINT (07) 3818 1988

Looking back I remember seeing cartoons of ultralight fliers with the wings sticking out from under the bed and the wife complaining but, I can understand that now, because when my Scout was in the box for those two months I loved it so much I would polish it each night, handle it carefully then I would kiss it and dream of flying off into the wild blue yonder all to the amusement of my wife.

Eventually October come around and I assembled it near the shed, what a glorious machine, the wings were pale blue with white tips, it stood there looking like a pretty moth or butterfly. If you can picture a boat sail on it's side, that was the wing, it was called a reflex wing and everything moved. There were no ailerons on the Scout, roll control was gained by warping the end of the wing which worked well on a cool smooth morning but, if there was any wind things could get a bit uncomfortable.

The Scout had the control stick between your legs and I can remember many times with my knees apart and the stick right across and nothing happening, I learn to talk to it while I was waiting for the wing to come up. So with the Scout assembled I called my mate John Ball to come with me, well you have to have someone with you in case you have a ding.

We headed up to Teewah airstrip which was secluded, you could make all the noise you wanted without annoying anyone, Watts Bridge which was a cow paddock and Teewah were the best places to fly. I proudly assembled the wing and tail much to John's amusement, He kept taking heaps of photos. I think he thought it would be the last time he would see me in one piece.

Now picture this, I was the proud owner of a brand new Scout standing there with this wide open airstrip before me a manual on how to fly it in one hand and my heart wedge in my throat, (yes it did come with a manual). The manual said you had to push the stick forward to keep it on the ground and learn to high speed taxi steering with your feet, after all flying is just an extension of a high speed taxi.

Now the first Scout I bought had an 18 HP Robin engine on it, that's 18 HP flat out, so it was very light and it wanted to fly. After an hour of going flat chat up the strip I was starting to get my confidence but, John couldn't stop laughing, so I decided that this time I'm going to ease it one foot off the ground and fly along level with the ground, after all nothing much can go wrong at that height.

I lined up on the end of the strip and with teeth gritting I pushed the throttle wide open and as it picked up speed I eased back on the stick ever so gently because I only wanted to fly a foot above the ground, then it happened, it jumped fifty feet into the air in a second flat, so here I am not sure how to fly I'm way up in the air and running out of airstrip.

I can still recall the fear when it looked like I was going to miss the strip and head out over the jungle of paper bark trees but, I pushed the stick forward pulled the throttle and floated down landing on the end of the strip with not an inch to spare. After sitting there for minute with my heart wedge in my throat the fear factor started to subside and I thought that wasn't too bad, I think I'll have another try. Over the two day period I could take off and turn to land on different strips and the first time I did a circuit in the Scout was like going cross country.



Alice & Bert Percell with Bantam out west QLD.

Teewah airstrip was rough in those days and when it rained would be covered with water, now we had no pod, we sat out in the open, as we gained speed to take off the water flew straight off the tyres into our seat, so I decided to get a fiberglass pod fitted to keep the water out.

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I was so keen to fly that I wanted to fly every weekend, so I would make a phone call to someone, usually Ces Lee to see if anyone was going flying and within two hours I would receive a call telling me we're off to Teewah, there are sixteen Scouts six Skyrovers and anyone else who wanted to come along. The Scout was a real fun machine on a cool smooth morning but, wind was our enemy because they were so light they felt every bit of breeze and every thermal.

In the early days the only instrument we had was a hall airspeed indicator, which was stuck out side the plane just out of the prop wash, it looked like a rain gage with a disc that slid up and down a wire as the wind blew in the bottom. Many times I have seen a row of Scouts lined up in the dark waiting for it to get light enough to see the airspeed indicator, then off into the wild blue yonder.

While sitting in the Scout in the dark contemplating the flight trying to see the windsock your heart would skip a beat if you saw the wind sock move because the Scout needed still conditions.

At almost every fly-in something would happen, bear in mind there were no chief flying instructors in those days, you taught yourself and tried to learn from others mistakes.

Many a pilot took his wreckage home in the trailer but, two weeks later he would be back having another go, which to the Scouts credit not many people got killed, It was so light it just crumbled so a few new tubes and you were back in business.

There are many stories I could tell you about the early days, one guy I remember would sit around and brag about how many sorties he had flown, & how many crashes he had. He had just bought a second hand Scout and was learning to taxi at Teewah when the wheel came off, he was absolutely white and shaking, the other pilots said if you had been involved in all the crashes you've claimed, loosing a wheel off a Scout should have been a piece of cake.

Another time us new Scouters invited the old Scouters along to a fly in at Teewah, some of them dragged their old Scouts out of the sheds, even Ron Wheelen the maker of the Scout came along. One guy who will remain nameless finally got his little Robin motor going after cleaning the hornets out of the muffler so he straps himself into the Scout wearing a pair of goggles and thongs, with hair blowing back he took off and came over our heads no higher than fifty feet and two seconds latter there was a hell of a clatter and his propeller, pulley and belts all fell to the ground, he had just enough height to get back on the strip.

I loved the camaraderie in those days, because we were all flying a similar aircraft we would all go for little trips together. Because the Scout had a wing that moved even small thermals became a big thing, I would see someone come into land and at the end of the strip sometimes they would get a small rocky but, around the fire at night after a few beers the stories flowed thick and fast about how they were chucked around and swore at one stage they were upside down.

So while learning to fly the Scout I would go out to Watts Bridge regularly, it was a cow paddock then, after the cows became so used to the planes we had to fly over them low and chase them off the strip so as to land.

These days I fly a Bantam B22J powered by a Jabiru engine and living a child long dream. Flying simple, safe and having adventures, the best part is being able to share the adventure with family and friends.

For the past six months I have been wanting to go back to Teewah airstrip but, each time I go to Kilcoy the Conondale Range is covered in cloud or fog but, recently I got up early and the day was perfect so I put on some extra fuel and prepared for take off. I took off and climbed to 4,600 feet to get over the Conondale Range and followed a valley straight to Cooroy township then lost some height to fly along the beach.

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Alice and Bert Percell with Bantam B22J

After flying along the beach up to the Cherry Venture ship wreck, I came back and landed at the Teewah airstrip, the country looks a treat after recent rain. As I walked around Teewah airstrip all the memories came flooding back, and I couldn't get over the strip, it was in the best condition, much wider than it use to be and very smooth. While I was there I saw the strip used for trike and aerochute lessons, then I noted a big sock with a plaque on it which told the story.

The air strip is now called Bazzo airfield after a local resident who came in with his earthmoving equipment weekender and leveled the strip.

Teewah airstrip is in a national park, apparently they had trouble getting the stone brought in because it's not natural to the area but, a councilor became involved and the rock was brought in to hold the plaque. After a good chat with four local fliers I took off and flew back to Kilcoy, had a lovely flight but, because of the cloud build up I couldn't get as high as I would have liked but, we made it just the same.

Yes I miss the good days but, I wouldn't swap my little Bantam for anything, if I could put the wing under the bed I would, and I still kiss it occasionally much to Alice's amusement.

If anyone would like to talk about their flying exploits, give me a ring on 3209 1038. I also have a Canadian propeller for sale, 64 X 32 only done about 20 hours and makes a 447 Rotax preform well. \$ 300.00

.....Happy flying.

Bert Percell 2005

Aircraft Design (A 1 day short course on Aircraft Design that will cover a variety of topics such as stability and control, horizontal stabilizer and elevator, fin and rudder, aircraft weight and balance, propeller efficiency, structures and many more topics.

Instructor: Bill Whitney (Reg 35)
Date: Saturday 9th April 2005
Time: 9:00am – 4:00pm (1 hour lunch break)
Venue: St Philip's Anglican Church Hall. Cornwall St, Annerley, Brisbane.
Cost: \$25 (includes notes)
Lunch: \$10 or BYO.
To register: bwhitney@bigpond.net.au

The annual Clifton Fly-In

12 - 13 MARCH 2005

BANGE AIRFIELD aka "CLIFTON INTERNATIONAL"

ANNUAL DARLING DOWNS SPORT AIRCRAFT ASSN ANNUAL FLYIN

This has become a premier attraction for all types of aviation, especially recreational Ultralights, Homebuilt, Sport, and Vintage aircraft and any other flying machine

*Saturday afternoon; prime time for the SKYCAMPING set to arrive
(pls adv if you are camping over for catering purposes)*

enjoy great aviating fellowship on the southern downs as the sun sets; BBQ Dinner/ Beer Tasting/ and Hangar Talk

Sunday morning; you won't get a chance to sleep in HERE; the crisp morning air challenges you to swing a prop and disturb the air;

BBQ Breakfast and Reviver;

*Here's the goss; 6km west of Clifton Township on the Clifton-Leyburn Road
Clifton Multicom 126.7*

(BANGE 27 55.66S; 151 50.85 E; 1500FEET)

contact trevor B on 07 4695 8541 OR email trevorbange@bigpond.com

from "THE VIRTUAL FLYING CLUB".....mikecharliemike_8kcab@hotmail.com

Queensland Ultralight Association

MINUTES OF GENERAL MEETING

7 February 2005

OPENED 8:00PM

APOLOGIES

Col Thorp, Mike Altria

VISITORS

Nil

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Moved

Mike Smith

Seconded

Burt Purcell

CARRIED

TREASURER'S REPORT

Balance: \$18,956.54

Treasurer informed club new lease will cost \$4000.00

Hangar rent is now \$80.00 per calander month.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES -

Nil

GENERAL BUSINESS

- 1. Beven Dryden resigned as Secretary.
Malcomb McKenzie - Volunteered, Elected un-opposed.*
- 2. Members were asked to think about selling the hangar and building the Club House.*

Thanked Robin Salisbury for preparing the supper.

Meeting Closed: 9:00pm

A strange Ultralight Aircraft was sighted recently at the Bradfield Airstrip.

Obviously, as it is quite large, it is constructed of the latest Space-Age light-weight materials and the engines employ the latest 21st Century Technology.

It would seem to this observer that the owner / constructor has flaunted some of the RAA Regulations by fitting two 550HP Radial Engines and sufficient seating to accommodate 16 passengers.

.....Gavin McGrath

More from the "THE VIRTUAL FLYING CLUB"

26 - 27 FEBRUARY 2005

WATTS BRIDGE (YWSG)

AEROBATIC CLUB PRACTICE

contact liz cook 0419 369 963 OR mal beard 0418 624 624

12 - 13 MARCH 2005

WATTS BRIDGE (YWSG)

AEROBATIC CLUB MINI COMPETITION AND PRACTICE

contact liz cook 0419 369 963 OR mal beard 0418 624 624

25 - 28 MARCH 2005

NARROMINE (YNRM)

NATFLY 2005

RECREATIONAL AVIATION AUSTRALIA INC (RAA)

"THE ANNUAL EVENT OF EVENTS"

contact Narromine Visitor Information on 02 6889 4596

25 -28 MARCH 2005

PARKES (YPKS)

AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL AEROBATIC CHAMPIONSHIPS

contact liz cook 0419 369 963 OR mal beard 0418 624 624

09 - 10 APRIL 2005

FITZY'S FLYIN

PLACE WASH AND PHOT SHOOT

just north of Biloela towards Smoky Creek

after the success last year's event they thought they should do it again

this Fly-in is also going to consist of a plane wash and photo shot this will give you all

another chance to have your flying beauties photographed BYO Swag and camping gear/ BBQ/ refreshments on sale flying events planned on the day.

FITZY coordinates S 24° 19.270 E 150° 30.518

elev 640ft Grass Runways 06-24 1000m 30-12 750m

contact tony fitzy fitzycon@tpg.com.au

30 APRIL - 02 MAY 2005

INGLEWOOD INTERNATIONAL LABOR DAY WEEKEND

"THE GATHERING OF THE TRIBES"

tried n true country hospitality on the outer downs; just north of TEXAS Q4385

(thanks again to Lee Kernaghan);

small country town, small country airfield, BIG on hospitality

**GYROS/ HANG GLIDERS AND AEROTUGS/ TRIKES/ ULTRALIGHTS/ HOMEBUILTS/
EXPERIMENTAL/ GENERAL AVIATION**

the annual gathering of the 'Aviating Tribes' on the edge of the great beyond

Camp out under the stars next to the airfield/ stay in a local motel or hotel OR fly in for just the day;

*BUT if you haven't recently experienced Inglewood; then you may not be a charter member of the
Australian Aviating Tribe*

*SPECIAL NOTE: as Inglewood hasn't been allotted a discrete frequency for its council owned airfield,
use the default 126.7 mhz if you must;*

*BUT don't be surprised if most of the traffic is not radio equipped; of course, keep your ears open; BUT
most importantly "KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN"*

.....mikecharliemike_8kcab@hotmail.com