



Watts News

A newsletter issued by the Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield

December 2004

The Christmas Extravaganza

What an end of year event we had on November 27th. While numbers were down on last year the hangar was still comfortably full with sixty-nine tickets sold. The food was good and the atmosphere really friendly. The one man musical entertainment was excellent as were the movies on the big screen. These pictures capture the essence of the evening where everyone seemed to win a prize of some sort. Our thanks once again to Glenda Faint and her team for a great send-off to 2004.



To all our many friends at home and abroad, WBMA wishes you the very best for Christmas and may you experience its essence, 'Peace on Earth', in 2005.



The Morning After...



Barry Hempel's Antonov (Big Bird) parked on the taxiway while the familiar 'Watts fog' slowly dissipates in the morning sun

The Great Vetiver Grass Plant-in and Veterans Tour

A cool, cloudy day was welcome on Saturday October 30th when approximately twenty leaseholders arrived to plant the vetiver grass and install a large speed sign at the second gate. Due to effective organisation and teamwork all jobs were complete by 10:15.



Squadron veterans pose with Mike Nelson while enjoying Watt's hospitality at Rod and Noelenes air chalet

As the team were enjoying morning tea and conducting an impromptu leaseholder's meeting, Neil Thompson's party of 5 Squadron veterans arrived. Most will recall that 5 Squadron was one of the groups operating out of Watts Bridge in WW2. Currently a helicopter Squadron, Neil's boys were veterans from Vietnam and the Middle East.

An airfield tour was arranged and Mike Nelson escorted the party around. During this time they



Rural activities at Watts Bridge

were able to establish from old photos the location of the original ops. hut, and, thanks to helpful commentary from Ross Stenhouse, where the sleeping quarters were. Also, Peter Freeman was able to show historic WW2 photos from some resources he has and so the party was able to get an accurate feel as to how the airfield must have looked back in 1942-43. The rapport struck between Neil's boys and Watt's members was immediate and contact is sure to be maintained.



While it may not be 1942, a Boomerang at Watts Bridge must evoke memories of that era. (QVAG Festival of Flight 2003)

Lease registration

Following an informative leaseholder's meeting at John McCarron's Archerfield offices on the evening of Thursday October 21st, the Board of Management is pleased to announce that leaseholders have universally chosen to secure their Watts Bridge investment by agreeing to the process of lease registration. The first cost associated with the process will be an airfield survey. The scope of agreement means that application will be a one-off collective action and the number of leaseholders involved will ensure that costs are held to a minimum.

The Annual General Meeting

The AGM was held on the Sunday morning of December 5th at Mt Beppo Hall. The atmosphere was congenial with useful input from members. The Board of Management was elected unopposed, as was the Airfield Council. Numbers were smaller than in previous years with twenty-five financial members attending.

Board of Management Annual Report

As we reflect upon the past fifteen months it certainly has been a whirlwind ride but finally some things are starting to fall into place. This list of achievements has been taken from the report presented by the Board at the AGM Sunday December 5th:

1. Surveying WBMA member priorities for State Development. The first priority identified was resolving the Silverleaves Road issue. The Board has convinced all Government stakeholders that it is high priority. One driver to this heightened sense of urgency has been increased levels of airfield vandalism and the need to secure the airfield perimeter.
2. Currently appealing the 2003/2004 airfield valuation and negotiating staged increases from South East Queensland Water Corporation (SEQWC). The result of this appeal is very close to hand.
3. Negotiating agreement from SEQWC to register leases and progressing the process of lease registration forward with full support from WBMA leaseholders.
4. Negotiating a resolution process on outstanding airfield infrastructure issues (Air Chalets and Hangars) with Esk Shire Council (ESC) and SEQWC.
5. Developing a format of regular meetings (already referred to) with SEQWC, ESC, State Development and WBMA in order to progress the Airfield.
6. Developing a strong working relationship with local member Dorothy Pratt who is kept informed on WBMA progress.
7. Developing a comprehensive application for funding from Jupiter's Casino for the Permanent Ablutions Block with a letter of support from SEQWC.
8. Devising low cost solutions for extending the capacity of the current effluent disposal system (SS1) and bringing it up to EPA standards.
9. Securing an interim agreement between State Development, SEQWC, ESC and WBMA as to the 5 year concept for the airfield. Such an agreement is a necessary precursor to developing the new Airfield Land Use Plan. This interim agreement allows significant facility upgrades for new Air Chalets and Hangars in the future.
10. Securing agreement from SEQWC for rostered multiple 'duty' caretakers. A duty statement is presently being prepared by the Board and applications will be invited. Members are assured that the recruitment processes will be rigorous.
11. Commendation by SEQWC on the professionalism and quality of the 2004/5 Airfield Audit.

Three points need to be made:

Firstly, the sum of the Board of Management's achievement is far greater than the total capacities of each member serving on it. In other words, it is the collective effort that has yielded these results.

Secondly, the Board would not have been able to achieve to this level without the support and expertise from so many of our members too numerous to mention. Our thanks go out to all of you.

And finally, the Board looks forward to the opportunity of serving for another year, so that all the good things begun in 2004 are brought to fruition.

Mike Nelson, Board of Management

Airfield Council Report

In our first year under the new constitution, I must say that my expectations for the new organisation have been well and truly exceeded at all levels. Congratulations are due to all members who have made contributions over this period, but particularly to our Board of Management who have been tireless in putting our house in order and advancing the professionalism of all facets of our association.

To my fellow members of the Airfield Council, and representatives of the various Home Base Groups, my thanks and appreciation for the contributions over the year.

Our focus has been on three primary areas:

1. Future planning and priorities to meet HBG needs;
2. Review of the Operations By-Laws;
3. Oversight of airfield activities and interactions between users.

We welcome input from our members regarding any other matters to which we should give consideration.

Progress has been made in all matters and I am pleased to report that this would have to have been the quietest and most harmonious year I can recall in my 10 years at Watts Bridge. Congratulations are also due to Rod and the Works Committee for the maintenance of the Airfield - I have not seen it looking better ever!

The first draft of the revised Ops By-Laws will soon be reviewed by the Council and the Board, prior to distribution to members for comment. Our goal is to complete this process early in the New Year, for formal adoption at the next General Meeting of the Association.

Once again, thank you to all members for the maturity and consideration demonstrated throughout the year.

Ian Perkins,
Chair, Airfield Council

And now for the New Year...

- u The WBMA Integrated Planning Act Application is now nearing completion and will be submitted to South-East Queensland Water Corporation (SEQWC) for approval before the year is out. Once approved, the airfield survey process can begin. Leaseholders should expect invoices relating to the survey cost early next year.
- u With considerable funding support from State Development, Ipswich Region and SEQWC, the consultancy firm required to develop the WBMA Land Use Plan should be engaged by February 2005.
- u The new registered lease draft has now been developed by WBMA and has gone before SEQWC and Council for approval.

Liz Cook, Secretary