



October 2003

Watts News

A newsletter issued by the Watts Bridge Memorial Flying Field Air Chalet and Commercial Owners Group

The new constitution gets up

On a rather bleak Sunday August 17th the General Meeting to consider constitutional change was held at Mt Beppo Hall. The venue, though spartan, was spacious with good facilities. The meeting was well attended and a spirit of working towards a common goal evident. Some

minor changes were made, further improving the draft, and the constitution was passed with only one dissenting vote. The immediate challenge is to provide appropriate candidates for the AGM to vote in the Board of Management while Homebase Groups elect their representa-

tives for the Airfield Council. As it is envisaged that these two management groups be made operational immediately following the AGM. it is crucial that the Homebase Groups begin the process of electing A.C. representatives.

Personality Profile: Ian Purdie's tale

I have always been fascinated with things that fly. I started model making during WW2 making gliders, rubber powered, then gradually to control line and free flight powered with ED diesels McCoy 49 and Tempest 60. While going to Swinbourne Technical College in Melbourne got one up to a speed of 103 MPH.

Joined the Army in National Service, CMF 8 years Vehicle & Tank, 3rd medium workshop in Castlemaine.

Learned to fly at Moorabin at McKenzie Flying School 1957 in DH82 Tiger moth. Soloed in 8.05 hrs (DCA Min 8 hrs). full PPL in 1959.

Married Annette 1961, went to the Solomon Islands and took over a Sawmill with 2 partners Lived at Red Beach on Guadalcanal, where first offensive landing of WW2 took place.

We supplied timber and logs locally and exported to PNG, Japan, Fiji, Vanuatu and Australia.

I bought a Cessna 182A, VH-SPF (then to VP - PAH) from Catholic Mission, Buka on Bougainville. Taught myself to fly it (I thought it was a 172 when I hitch hiked a ride on local aircraft to Rabaul. Then back to Buka to look at it). The first flights were exciting. Then an overseas flight over lots of water to Henderson Field, Guadalcanal. (this heading is

essentially the same as the one flown by Saburo Sakai, the Japanese Air Ace who flew from Rabaul in his Zero to join the battle in 1942)

I formed the Solomon Islands Aero Club and 27 Pilots soloed and obtained BSIP Private Licence in the 182. Mine was No. 008 behind 7 commercial pilots in Megapode Airways. Later called Solair. It was the first privately owned aircraft and 008 was first private licence.

Our son Mark was born in 1964 at Honiara and at 7 years old he was flying the 182 straight and level. Also turns etc. with the help of cushions and me on rudders. He now has almost 10,000 hours and sure can teach me a thing or three.

I restarted flying at Archerfield hiring A/C then buying a share in a

Victa VH-RQH (I helped build the original wooden Victa VH-FMM at Perfectus Aircrew Coy. In Newport, Melbourne in 1950's, when I returned to Melbourne from Castlemaine after becoming a turner and machinist).

I also bought a Piper PA-22-108 Colt which I am restoring after hail damage at Archerfield. I also fly Gliders and the Tugs at Kingaroy and have been Tugmaster for 10 years. At 69 I still love everything about flying and aircraft and hope to continue for a while longer.





The QVAG festival of flight

Another great QVAG event occurred on Saturday and Sunday August 30th and 31st.

Of particular note was the presence of two rare Boomerangs brought in from Toowoomba. The sight, sounds and performance of these WW2 'panic' fighters reminded those watching of

Australia's capacity, in 1942, to design and produce, in sixteen weeks, fighter aircraft able to fill the defensive gap until Spitfires and Mustangs arrived. A casual observation would be that this weekend seemed bigger than last year's.



Airfield Council Christmas Event

Glenda Faint has proposed that a Christmas Event be held on December 13th and 14th. QVAG is happy to have this event coinciding with their Christmas weekend. Glenda has made it quite clear that this will be a convivial occasion without politics. All members are urged to support Glenda in making this a weekend to remember.

Regional Development Marburg Workshop

Liz Cook stood in for Ian Perkins and was accompanied by Gus and Barry at the workshop held by Regional Development at Marburg. They participated in the planning on that day. Once again WB was a centrepiece in the aviation discussion. Regional Development is laying the groundwork and doing research in setting up the SEQ Aviation precinct. It is vital in achieving our preferred future that our people are available to consult and be consulted with. We commend the efforts of our three as well as those who may become involved once the new management structure is in place

More Airchalets in the making

It is interesting to learn that Derek Robinson and the Freemans have Airchalet plans before the SEQWC while the Shiptons are presenting plans for a commercial site. We offer our support in these ventures.

Next meeting details

The next meeting is set down at Jeff and Gerry Underhill's (no 9) at 1 pm on Sunday October 12. Please bring your own chair. We invite agenda items for discussion as there is a lot happening at present. As Jan and Mike will be in New Zealand the final agenda list will be e mailed out by Rod Mill. Jeff will be the chairperson.



Airchalet members at last meeting