



# The N.S.W. Sport Aircraft Club Newsletter

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2011

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**Above:** Richard Wiltshire teamed up with Paul Andronicou to represent Australia at the world aerobatic championships held in Italy last month. No, Richard didn't win, but he learned a lot from the French team, who he judged as excellent. Richard is seen here back at Wedderburn building his new MXS aircraft.

**Below:** Alice Collett, Greg and Anne Goulding, Vic Laybutt, Bruce and Laura Cunningham are pictured here on the recent Queensland Outback Safari organised by Vic. The full story appears on **Page 12**



Contact your Newsletter Editor at  
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Visit our website:- [www.wedderburnairstrip.com.au](http://www.wedderburnairstrip.com.au)

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2 birthdays and a wedding	15	* UPCOMING FLYING AND SOCIAL EVENTS *	

If you want to stage an event, or invite the Club to join you on a flying jaunt please talk to me. You will earn additional Championship points.

**Bret Cavanagh**

#### UPCOMING EVENTS. Put 'em in your diary

<b>New Constitution Special General Meeting, Phase 1</b>	Sunday, 23 <sup>rd</sup> October, 2pm	Clubhouse
	Contact: Margaret Nightingale.	
<b>Social Workday.</b>	Sunday, 30 <sup>th</sup> October. Sign in at 9am. Free lunch for members.	Wedderburn
	Contact: Richard Thompson.	
<b>Annual Gloucester Fly-in</b>	Saturday & Sunday, 5th & 6th November	Gloucester
	Contact: David Rittie.	
<b>Annual Open Day.</b>	Sunday, 13 <sup>th</sup> November, 10am.	Wedderburn
	Contact: Geoff May. 0404 084 199	
<b>Temora Air Show.</b>	Saturday, 19 <sup>th</sup> November.	Temora
<b>New Constitution Special General Meeting, Phase 2</b>	Sunday, 27 <sup>th</sup> November, 2pm.	Clubhouse
	Contact: Margaret Nightingale.	
<b>General Meeting</b>	Sunday, 11th December, 2pm	Clubhouse
	Contact: Margaret Nightingale	

#### **CHRISTMAS PARTY & ANNUAL AWARDS PRESENTATION** **SUNDAY, 18th DECEMBER, 12 midday, Aviators Lounge, Albion Park**

<b>Fly-in/Drive-in Brunch</b>	Sunday, 5th February, 10am to 2pm.	Wedderburn
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**We need members to organise some social events and some flying adventures.** Please contact Bret Cavanagh if you are able to organise an event (or two).

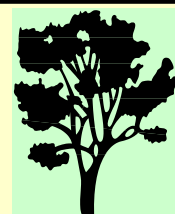


*Need some exotic plants, or want some peaches or other stone fruit? You can choose from a wide selection near the airfield, just around the corner at #7 Blackburn Road.*

**HARLAND'S Fruit, Nursery and Landscaping**

**Phone 4634 1234 or 0402 086 032, or drop by and see Charles or Clayton.**

**\*The Harlands also do hangar concrete slabs, at very reasonable prices\***





## From your Editor

Welcome to the October/November 2011 issue of your Newsletter.

Sadly, this issue is dominated by the stories of the loss of five of our SAC family. You will find messages of condolences and eulogies at various places within this issue. My thanks go to those who have contributed towards these memorials.

On a brighter note, in this issue we also celebrate a wedding, and a couple of significant birthdays.

On another bright note, Bruce Cunningham has contributed an article about the recent Queensland Outback Safari organised by Vic Laybutt. Unfortunately, five members withdrew from the safari shortly before departure. Bruce's story appears on **Page 12**. Thanks Bruce.



Thanks to those who have sent in photos for this issue. Only a few appear because of space constraints.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

**David Rittie**

You can contact your Newsletter Editor at [david.rittie@optusnet.com.au](mailto:david.rittie@optusnet.com.au)

## Words from the President

Hi there.

### Five of our SAC family lost.

The last two months have been the worst in the Club's history with the loss of five members of our SAC family, four from natural causes and another as a result of an air crash.

Just as we went to print last time we heard of the loss of Gladys Priddle. Since then we lost one of our founding members, Steve Cavanagh followed by the much publicised air crash and death of Gary Malane. This was followed by the horrifying news of the sudden illness and death of Lindsay Sinclair, and the most recent was the sad news of the passing of Wes Dunn, who suffered ill and failing health in recent years.

The last two months have been a very difficult and sad time for all.

### New Constitution

The New Constitution Sub-Committee has arrived at a series of recommendations for some rules that should be contained in a new Club Constitution. These points will be debated at a Special General Meeting to be held on 23rd October. The decision of the members at this meeting will then be voted upon at the second Special General Meeting to be held on 27th November. Any changes will require the usual 75% majority.

Details of the proposed changes appeared in the Secretary's column on **Page 4** of the previous (August/

September) issue of your Newsletter.

### Toilet Blocks

The construction of the two toilet blocks in the northern precinct has taken another step forward with the erection of the frames for both of these facilities being built in Hangar Rows "P" and "V", with sheeting and doors in progress.

Again, our thanks go to the dedicated members who are making this happen.

### Open Day

Geoff May is in the final process of organising the Open Day. Please assist him where possible when or if you are requested to do so.

### Lease

There has been another step taken in the slow process of renewing the lease of our airfield.

A few weeks ago a property valuer came to the airfield to assess its value for the purpose of arriving at the new annual lease charges. It was pointed out to this valuer that there is no town power, gas or town water available at the airfield, that we exist in a mine subsidence area and that the ground is unable to be used for any form of farming due to the lack of arable soil.

There are only a couple of steps remaining in the process, which includes the signing of the new lease, the extinguishing the old and the registration of the lease somewhere in



the government system.

We are hoping to make a bit of a ceremony of the signing of the new lease (whenever that moment arrives). Hopefully, it can happen at the airfield, with lots of fanfare and lots of members present.

### Hangars and Hangar Space

If you are looking for hangar space, or have hangar space to rent, you can contact the Secretary, Margaret, on 0425 380 966, and she can usually help.

If you intend to buy or sell a hangar you **MUST** contact Margaret to ensure that the deal can legally proceed.

### Safety

When landing, please beware of kangaroos and other wildlife on the runway, and please continue to adhere to the 'fly neighbourly' policy.

Please fly safely.

**David Rittie**

## From the Secretary's Desk

Hi Everyone

It seems to me that the Club is moving along quite well at the moment. There are many ongoing and completed infrastructure projects making the airfield a more comfortable and safer place. Let me list just a few:

- moving and upgrading the fuel bowser
- moving and upsizing the machinery shed
- upgrading the clubhouse power system
- building two new toilet blocks in the northern area of the airfield that will hopefully be completed before Open Day
- clearing of undergrowth from fire prone areas
- upgrading of fire extinguishers
- placarding of hangars re dangerous goods and potential fire hazards
- general repairs and maintenance of the Club's equipment
- maintaining the grass safety strip
- organising workdays and feeding the workers.

Meanwhile on the paperwork side the Committee and others have been busy

- progressing the signing of the new 40 year lease



the website

- reviewing the Club's insurance packages
- interviewing and admitting new members
- streamlining membership details
- transferring numerous hangar licence agreements as hangars change hands
- reviewing the Club's constitution
- organising the annual Open Day festivities
- continuing communication with members through the newsflash, newsletter and

It's not a bad list. I'm sure there are more things people have been up to. Occasionally things just happen and no-one knows who to thank for it.

I'm sure I speak on behalf of all members when I say "thank you" to all those who have contributed to the wonderful airfield we have today. At this time we have a great team of members who work happily together to further the work started 30 odd years ago for the benefit of all. What a great Club! It's great to see what we can achieve when we all pull together.

Keep up the good work.

Cheers for now

**Margaret Nightingale**



Pictured above are some of the projects undertaken by the Committee recently, which are listed in the **Secretary's Column** on this page. **Clockwise from top left:** the new fuel bowser, the new toilet block under construction in Hangar Row "V", the new toilet block under construction in Hangar Row "P" (with Robert Greig hard at work), the grass safety strip, and the enlarged machinery shed. More pictures appear on the **Next Page** →



**Below, left to right:** the new solar panels, the new auto-start generator, and the diesel tank for the new generator



## BOOK NOW FOR THE 2011 CHRISTMAS PARTY

**WHEN:** Sunday 18th December

**WHERE:** The Aviators Lounge, Albion Park Airport

**TIME:** 12 midday

**MENU:** Vegie Mornay Vol u Vent OR Prawn and Avocado Salad  
Roast Turkey, Ham and Pork OR Chicken Filo  
Steamed Christmas Pudding OR Chocolate and Coffee Trifle  
Tea/Coffee

### BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL

Register your name/s/table with Wendi Leigh at  
[wendileigh@southernphone.com.au](mailto:wendileigh@southernphone.com.au) before 12th December

**COST:** \$40 per person

**PAYMENT:** to be made by 12th December to:  
The Caretaker, Rouen Andrews.  
The Treasurer, Allan Aaron.  
The President, David Rittie.

Contact: 0425 380 964, OR  
Contact: 0412 404 787, OR  
Contact: 0407 890 791.

Both of the aircraft pictured below belong to Greg Ackman. They are parked beside a sign which reads:  
**“Aircraft Parking Past Clubhouse 300m. NO PARKING ELSEWHERE”**  
Is this a case of persistent civil disobedience? Good one Greg. 10 lashes.



## Bird Talk



Hi Everyone,

What a sad August and September our Club has had, it becomes very difficult to write words about our wonderful members and friends who have been taken from us.

Gladys Priddle, wife of member John Priddle, passed away on 1<sup>st</sup> August aged 87 years. Gladys was a very happy person and well respected. We extend our condolences to the Priddle family.

Our foundation member Steve Cavanagh, with membership number 18, was one of the group of members who started working from day 1(one) at our airfield, after our lease was signed in 1978. Many projects big and small, were commenced to make our airfield function, and Steve was always on hand to give of his time and energy. They were tough times but with everyone playing their part great things were achieved. Steve, together with Joyce, had Life Membership bestowed on both of them on 13-3-2005 in recognition of their continued efforts and support of SAC. It was a shock to hear that Steve passed away, on 16<sup>th</sup> August, aged 91 years. We will never forget Steve, a gentle and thoughtful man. Our love and sincere sympathy are with Joyce and her family.

Elsewhere in this Newsletter you will find eulogies and words of sympathy about Gladys Priddle, Steve Cavanagh, Gary Malane, Lindsay Sinclair and Wes Dunn.

I also had to farewell two of my friends who passed away on 25<sup>th</sup> August and 16<sup>th</sup> September so it has been a most distressing two months for me.

### FLY-IN/DRIVE-IN BRUNCH – SUNDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2011

I was very lucky to have Rodney George as “CHIEF CHEF” on this day and he was kept very busy actually cooking all the hot food - we ladies kept well away from the kitchen stoves - we were spoilt.

A total of 50 sat down to enjoy the meal and seven of this number were visitors so I do “thank” those members who brought along their friends. To Chef, Rodney, and the ladies who helped in preparing for our Brunch you did a great job. Our next Fly-In/ Drive-In Brunch will be held on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2012, so please place this date in your diary.

### WORK DAY - SATURDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2011

This Work day will be one I will always remember as our BBQ Chef for the day was Gary. I had Rouen make arrangements for me that Gary would be available to do the cooking. As usual Gary obliged and when I arrived at 9.30 a.m. he was there waiting for instructions. He did a marvellous job of cooking the onions, sausages and rissoles for the lunch. At one stage he did say that his leg was hurting after standing for so long but carried on to finish all the cooking. I was so appreciative of his help - he was a good guy. On having a chat with Gary he had told me that he was leaving for Ballina on Monday, and little did we know just what was going to happen six days later - it has been an unbelievable shock for our club.

The Luncheon went off very well and we had 67 members sit down to enjoy the spread before them – we even had Apple Pie with Custard and Ice Cream – what a treat!!

## Bird Talk (cont.)

To my team in the kitchen preparing the lunch, Dot, Maryanne, Inez, Veronica, Lorraine, Dawn and Donna “thank” you all for your continued great efforts. I would like to “thank” Ann McGann for coming to join us as well - it was good to have you aboard. To our junior helpers, Lillian and Abbey - well done - you are both very special to us.

To all who bought raffle tickets on our day a big “thank” you for your support.

1<sup>st</sup> prize winner of a Coles/Myer Gift Card worth \$50.00 was Ami Gale, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> prize winner of a Bunnings Gift Card worth \$20.00 was Tim Davis. Well done to both our winners, and we trust you enjoy your prizes.

I’m sure Richard was very happy with the work that was carried out by the team of workers.

### WORK DAY SUNDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2011- FREE LUNCH FOR MEMBERS

A reminder that this Work Day is the last scheduled for this year and also is only two weeks from our Open Day, so we will need to have as many of our members come along to work their little hearts out in readiness for our BIG DAY. I’m sure Richard will have a long list of jobs for you all to do.

The team of Ladies and Gents of the Social Committee will prepare a menu of Chicken, with various Cold Meats and platters of mixed salads, followed by assorted cakes, for all of our workers. Hope to see a good roll up on the 30<sup>th</sup>. Also, a Raffle will be held on the day so-o-o-o “bring your money with you”.

OPEN DAY

OPEN DAY

OPEN DAY

SUNDAY 13<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 10.00 A.M. to 4.00 P.M.

Yes! countdown to our Open Day has begun, by the time you receive this Newsletter we will have less than five weeks left before our BIG DAY will be here, so REMEMBER to make a note of this all important date in your diary and to make sure you bring your families and friends along to this our one big day of the year. We need you all to support your CLUB.

Member Geoff May is Open Day co-ordinator once again and we will all need to assist Geoff in everyway to make our day successful.

Our friends at Camden Lions Club have been invited to carry out the cooking of all hot foods for our day and with their great menu I’m sure no one will go hungry. The Social Committee team will once again be selling, the always popular, Devonshire Teas (oh! those delicious scones or pikelets with jam and cream) plus mixed sandwiches, slices of carrot cake, muffins, Tea, Coffee, soft drinks. For the children there will be bags of mixed lollies and Potato chips. Our prices will be very reasonable.

I would ask our Ladies (better halves of our members) if at all possible, could each one of you please donate some home made cooking of cakes, slices, biscuits, jams or pickles to boost our stalls( many of my cooks are just worn out and cannot contribute anymore). Please bring your donation of goodies along as early as possible on our day of days.

I am thrilled to have Ann McGann on our team of helpers for Open Day, if there are more of our newer ladies who would like to give of a few hours to help us in serving of the Devonshire Teas etc. I would greatly appreciate your assistance. Just let me know so I can make out the roster.



## Bird Talk (cont.)

Also this year we will NOT be selling books or trash and treasure. Our Club merchandise will be on sale at one of our stalls so if you want to look the part get in early and buy. If you are needing to purchase a Club Shirt or Cap before Open Day, please contact me on 9567 6522 or email me on [mda@isp.net.au](mailto:mda@isp.net.au)

Cheers

Margaret Adams



## VALE Steve Cavanagh



Steve initially was a member of ULAA, then he joined the SAAA and then later became a member of our own NSW SAC.

He joined our club at its very beginning back in the late 70s, and is therefore fondly referred to as a “foundation member” of our club. He was assigned “Membership Number 18”.

In his very early years Steve had a hobby horse and has mentioned to one of our members that, at a young age, he dreamt of being a jockey. But for most of Steve’s life he has had a strong love of aviation.

He has successfully owned and built two Pietenpol aircraft. By way of explanation, the Pietenpol is a parasol wing homebuilt aircraft with a wooden frame structure. The first prototype of this design was built before Steve’s time, back in 1928, which confirms that Steve was a lover of antique aircraft.

Steve’s ability to both design and construct these aircraft is well known to us. The first of his two Pietenpol aircraft had an “A” model Ford car engine fitted to it, which made a quite distinctive and unusual “putt-putt” sound. In the second aircraft he fitted a Leyland/Rover aluminium V8 car engine which improved its performance considerably. His aircraft were regularly put on show at our annual Open Days, and appeared at the Schofields Air Show.

On the social side he was observed as being an incredibly good dancer. One of our members vividly recalls seeing Steve dancing so gracefully with Joyce on many of the social occasions that were held in the clubhouse in the early years. We also know that he enjoyed a class of cherry at times.

Steve was deeply involved in the relocation of the old Officers’ Mess from Bankstown to our airfield, which became our clubhouse. This is easily the most difficult logistical endeavour ever undertaken on behalf of our club. We are all forever grateful for his effort with this task.

Over the years, Steve attended most work days and there was always a job waiting to be done and Steve would make sure he completed that task.

Because of his considerable contribution to our club Steve, along with cherished wife, Joyce, the honoured title of ‘Life Membership of the NSW Sport Aircraft Club’ was deservedly bestowed upon him at the Annual General Meeting on 10th March 2005.

The title of “Life Membership” being given to a member of our club is indeed a great honour because, of the many hundreds of members who have come and gone, only 11 such life membership titles have ever been awarded.

As his years advanced, Steve continually maintained a strong association with our club. In fact, he, along with Joyce, attended the recent Fly-in/Dive-in Brunch held on 7th August. Nobody was aware at that time that heavy storm clouds were gathering over Steve’s life. He suffered a severe stroke the following weekend, and a couple of days after that, Steve’s flying days and indeed his life ended.

Since his death, comments received about Steve included: “Quietly spoken”, “Polite”, “Nice old bloke”, “Quiet achiever”, “Helluva nice guy”, “Very quiet”, and “Old style gentleman.”

We are thankful to Steve for contributing as much as he did in the early days of the Club which has allowed it to blossom into the great club that it is today.

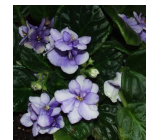
We are thankful for all these memories, and the memories of Steve Cavanagh will stay in our minds, and in our thoughts, and in our hearts forever.

Margaret Adams, David Rittie





## VALE . . Gary Malane



Gary joined the NSW SAC in October/November 2006 as Uri Malaniak. He soon chose, and ordered from the factory, the aircraft that he wanted to fly, which was a Lightwing "Speed" with a Rotax 912, 100 HP engine.

Gary had recently retired from his career in the telecommunications industry in which he was clearly highly regarded, having been headhunted on two occasions that we know about.

Gary was very keen to get his new aircraft, but it took about a year to be built at the factory in Ballina. Upon receipt of the aircraft Gary joined in, and very much enjoyed, many of the Club's flying activities.

His flying activities were halted temporarily for nearly a year after he had a fall off his water tank stand a couple of years ago where he damaged his leg.

Gary's flying accident and his death were heavily publicised in all form of the media. He was flying from Ballina with his friend, Paul, down the coast when he made a "mayday" call reporting engine failure. He subsequently crashed into the sea off Curl Curl Beach just north of Sydney. Paul was able to escape but Gary died in the aircraft.

Gary's family held an unpublicised and very private funeral service, and so, a few days later, many club members and some of his close friends gathered in our

Clubhouse for "The Gary Malane Memorial BBQ". This was not a formal ceremony, but just a chance for us to remember Gary, for some to express their feelings, and to create some form of closure.

Visitors at the BBQ included Gary's passenger, Paul Graham, Gary's good friends Daryl, who came all the way from Young, and an old workmate Tony Liolio.

Messages of condolences were read out, which came from many sources including the Serpentine Aero Club near Perth; the Wedderburn Rural Fire Brigade; Gary's only niece, Jenna; and from some of our members who could not be present on the day.

Some of those present spoke emotionally about their lost friend, and the good experiences they had shared with Gary, which was followed by a toast in his memory. A few moments of silence were observed at the subsequent General Meeting later that day.

From the club's point of view, Gary was a very likeable person. He helped willingly, in recent times, with cooking at the club social functions. He loved his aeroplane and his flying, and was obviously an expert, and in demand, in his chosen field.

Gary will be missed by his many close friends.

**David Rittie**



**Left:** Gary's beloved Lightwing Speed aircraft.  
**Right:** Enjoying a moment with his close friends.  
**Below, left to right:** Gary at a wedding last year; the Rural Fire Brigade's notice posted in his honour; and a light moment with his great friend, Daryl Close.







# Vale . . Lindsay John Sinclair

13th September 1951 - 11th September 2011



Lindsay joined our flying club nearly ten years ago, and immediately became involved in all aspects of the club's activities. He soon joined the committee so that he could assist with the running of the club.

As a committee member he fought long and hard for what he believed was the best way forward on many major decisions that the club had to face, and worked hard to improve the airfield's facilities.

He became the club's 'fly-away' coordinator where he, with Maree, organised many varied and memorable flying activities, ranging from local single-day flying trips to longer interstate holidays, one of the most memorable being the 14 day trip from Sydney to Darwin where many club members flew their aircraft into many interesting places along the way.

Lindsay organised some of our traditional Open Days at the airfield which were hugely successful - better than had ever been previously achieved, and which have formed the basis and the model for our Open Days ever since.

The jewel in the crown of Lindsay's achievements and his most memorable was the club's trip to China, voted by most as the "best trip ever".

Lindsay spent much of his time restoring aircraft - mainly Yak 52s and 18Ts. The standard of workmanship was absolutely first class. The finished article was always technically perfect and aesthetically outstanding.

He was the leader of the "Russian Roolettes" flying

team which performed routines at many air shows across Australia. His other interests other than flying included boating, car racing and restoring old cars.

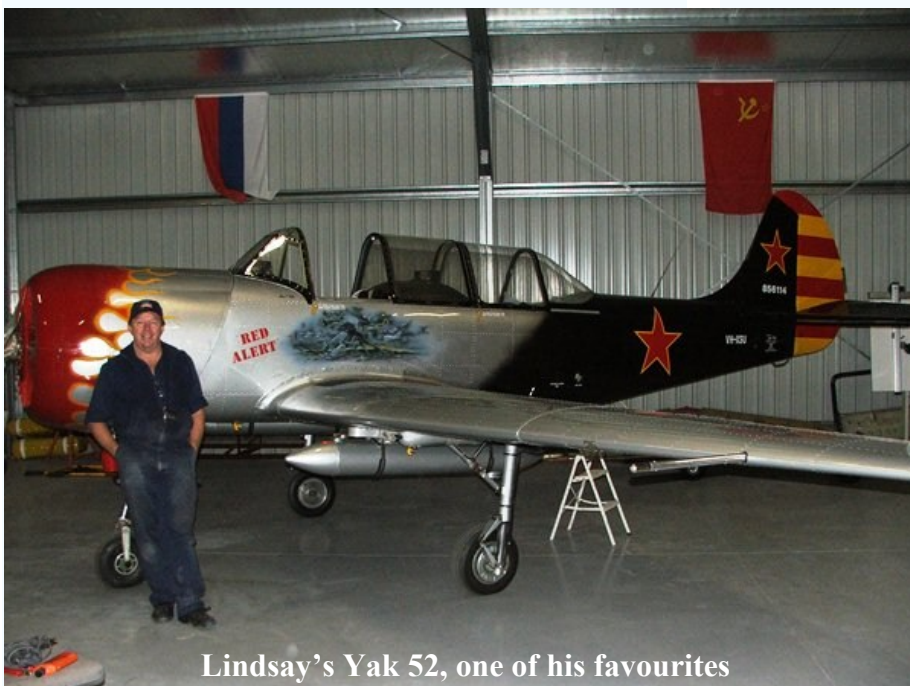
One of Lindsay's biggest contributions to our club was when he completely renovated the airfield caretaker's residence over many weeks and almost single-handedly, without being asked and without any reward. He also contributed his time to assisting other club members with work on their aircraft restoration projects.

Whilst in America, Lindsay was diagnosed with cancer of the pancreas and the liver, and died in his home town of Brisbane only a few weeks after, just two days before his 60th birthday.

Lindsay will be remembered as energetic, strong willed, and hard working, and with outstanding technical expertise. He was staunchly supportive of his friends, of which he had many, and he fitted much more into his 60 years than most.

Our sincere condolences go to Lindsay's wife, Maree, to his children and to his extended family.

**David Rittie**



Lindsay's Yak 52, one of his favourites



Lindsay with Maree



## Vale . . Wes Dunn

Our former member, Wes Dunn, sadly passed away in the morning of Tuesday, 27th September, aged just 71. He was a banker for most of his working life.

Since becoming involved with our club about seven years ago Wes joined in many events, including fly-always, usually with Ray Feneley in the Jodel. These included interstate trips to Goolwa in South Australia, and to Bundaberg in Queensland.

Easily the most memorable club event that Wes attended was the incredible two-week trip to China in 2006, along with his great friend, Barbara.

Wes loved working amongst aircraft. He spent much of



Wes assisted greatly with the restoration of the Feneley Yak 18T

his time as a tour guide at the Historical Aircraft Restoration Society (HARS) at Wollongong, but he will be remembered by many of us because of the considerable time he gave and the effort he contributed towards the suc-

cessful restoration of the Yak 18T belonging to the Feneley family.

Due to worsening ill health he resigned from the Club last year.

Wes developed lung cancer some years ago, and he had one of his lungs removed which temporarily saved his life. He survived for a few more years until finally succumbing to emphysema.

Wes loved life, flying, and anything to do with aircraft. He was the considerate, kind and thorough gentleman who worked carefully and steadily on his aircraft restoration projects.

He will be sorely missed by all of his old work mates, his fellow aviators and the greater aviation network.

Our sincere condolences go out to his children, to Barbara, and to his extended family.

**David Rittie**



## Vale - Gladys Priddle

Gladys Priddle, wife of member - John Priddle, mother of member - Robert, and grandmother to young Johnny passed away on 1st August 2011, aged 87 years.

"Glad", as she was known to her friends, died when she lost her battle with cancer.

Even though Gladys never became an associate member she was on hand to assist the Ladies Auxiliary whenever she could.

The social gatherings we had in the 80's & 90's saw Gladys and John attending, and thoroughly enjoying the company of our other members.

Gladys was a very happy person and well respected.

Her son, Robert, described her as "My wonderful mum."

We extend our condolences to all of the Priddle family.

**Margaret Adams, David Rittie**





## THE GREAT QUEENSLAND OUTBACK SAFARI

Report by Bruce Cunningham



The Cessna 177 Cardinal had taxied to a parking position next to a Nissan Patrol 4WD right outside the Nocundra Hotel. As the crew disembarked the Nissan driver was overheard to say "This is how the other half live." And after a cup of tea, and time to depart, the Nissan driver agreed to help push the aircraft back "But not until I've taken a photo of ya' aeroplane next to my Nissan."

We are out the back-of-Bourke on Day 2 of Vic's Outback Safari and getting to enjoy the can-do/make-do pragmatism of folk in the outback. At the end of this day's flying the nice young lady who helped with refuelling at Boulia offered the team a lift into town. Sitting cross-legged in the back of her white van, the boys fairly quickly figured the reason for the nice chrome rollers, tracks, and latches - 'We are in a plain hearse, right Bec?' "Sure are", the response.

"Hey Vic, next time you travel in one of these you won't be looking so cheerful!"

Subsequent transport between airport and accommodation included farm vehicles, a police paddy wagon, a Toll parcel delivery van, the fuel man and even an airport cleaning lady. Sometimes we walked and we took a taxi once. Accommodation was just as varied and included a cattle/camel station farm stay, country pubs, tents, recycled Olympic village housing and even converted railway carriages.

Two separate narratives were emerging - flying stuff and the tourist attractions.



From altitude we were able to see fellow tourists in campervans, caravans, 4 wheel drives and the country looked exquisite. We had been approached back in Narromine by a nice lady requesting an aerial photograph of her Canola crop (her best ever) and what a picture it made - luminescent even. Then after Bourke "to see the vision splendid of the sunlit

plains extended". You could see why A.B. Patterson would gladly have traded his city digs with Clancy. The Cooper and Diamantina, emerald green and expansive, appeared verdant and hospitable - so very different to the parched array of creek beds that the pioneering Durack family found when they arrived with their depleted herd during severe drought in the 1860's, and lost the lot.

Potentially very harsh country, the awful fate of Burke and Wills reminds us that, "Like aviation, the place is terribly unforgiving of carelessness, neglect or incapacity". We landed on the gravel strip alongside the famous Dig Tree - easy enough to locate with GPS in this featureless country. But we spoke repeatedly with admiration of the extraordinary navigation skills of Burke and Wills who ventured up to the Gulf and back to the Dig Tree without even a WAC chart.

Our flying group comprised a Piper Seneca, a Cessna 177 Cardinal RG and a Glasair



Sportsman. The fat-tired tail dragger Sportsman with 130 knots TAS was going to be trailing the retractables. But as the tour progressed, it was not the speed differential that was most evident, but rather the utilisation (or not) of new technology. The analogue-instrument retractables were armed not only with GPS but also I-Pad 2 OZ Runway technology and paper charts remained pretty much in the Nav bag. They would chat a bit on the common frequency about the convenience of all the required information being available at the touch of a button. Heck, they probably even enjoyed inflight entertainment.

The glass-cockpit Sportsman crew, on the other hand, tended to eschew the GPS magenta line and rustle the WAC charts, endeavouring to hone visual nav skills. The traditionalist tail-dragger pilot had worked with





Bush Pilots Airways in the late 1960's delivering mail bags and stuff around these parts and was now prone to wandering off course nostalgically to over fly some of the properties on the old network. But some of the low-tech visual cues are missing - these days it is rare for cattle stations to paint the name of the property on the homestead roof but it was a very sporting gesture to itinerant pilots of yesteryear.

Despite the distractions and meanderings, the tail dragger crew would invariably arrive at destination within minutes of the retractables. Generously the preceding crews would over fly, then convey the landing direction to the Sportsman crew to make good a straight in approach. When possible a Vno descent helped close the gap.

The 24 hour swipe card refuelling of Central NSW and Queensland gave way to less sophisticated fuel delivery in the west but there was a nostalgic moment for the Bush pilot when the Georgetown refueller appeared on the apron with two 44 gallon drums on the back of his ute and a hand pump - just like 1968!

Some of the airstrips were a bit agricultural but all three aircraft performed well without any running repairs. We enjoyed mainly good weather, although Airlie Beach was bypassed as the east coast took a drenching. And very low cloud at Carnarvon Gorge prompted an extra day in our 4 star en-suite tents. We were 15 days away without misadventure.



The destination groves and gorges of North Queensland were exquisite. Oasis-like from the air, the cool green gorges stood out in contrast to the open Queensland Savannah. Hospitality around the traps was delightful and we were fed and watered well. Notable too was the absence of tips jars, so com-

mon in Sydney cafes - instead a simple tin can with money slot labelled 'RFDS'.

The participants : Vic Laybutt and Alice, Greg Goulding and Anne (Annie the uncomplaining trooper on crutches and accompanying wheelchair after a double knee operation!) and Bruce Cunningham and Laura. The comradie was excellent. There were no arrests or scandals.

The itinerary: Comerook Station, NSW, Boulia, Qld via Noccundra Hotel, the Dig Tree and Birdsville, Adel's Grove, Cobbold Gorge, Undara Lava Tubes, Hughenden, Carnarvon Gorge and Walgett, NSW (with a few intermediate fuel stops).



#### Highlights:

Kayaking the serene Adel's Grove gorge, seeking fossils at Riversleigh, walking the Lava Tubes of Undara, silently travelling by electric boat down the delightful Cobbold Gorge, and a close up look at Jurassic period fossils at Hughenden - and for Greg and Annie a side trip to Croydon on the Gulflander train from Normanston. It was all good.

Thanks, Great tour, Vic and thanks too for the pre-loaded GPS and paper flight plans and particularly the sensible decision making along the way.

**Bruce Cunningham**



Great story Bruce. Thanks for sending it in. Pity we couldn't publish the 1000's of photos that came with it.

**Ed.**



## Aircraft and Hangars For Sale

### Kevin Haydon's impressive RV8, VH-KVI, is reluctantly for sale



110 hours, IFR category, Full glass panel, full featured A/P, every possible extra.  
Oshkosh Silver Lindy award winner.  
Call Kevin on 0408 694 713 for a full spec sheet and price.

### Bob Peak's Hangar, B3, and Honda Generator are for sale



Bob Peak's hangar and generator are for sale. Hangar is 12m wide and 9m deep with concrete floor, good doors and 4m tarred access to taxiway.

- Hangar B3, including Dexion shelving \$50,000 (negotiable)
- 3.3kva Honda Genset \$1,000

For more information contact Bob Peak by phone on:

**(02) 6973 1377**

or by email: [bobandpatpeak@gmail.com](mailto:bobandpatpeak@gmail.com)

### The late Randall Krebs' Jodel FDR250 (wooden, two seat aircraft) project is for sale.

Wing spar, wing ribs, fin, rudder, elevators, flaps, ailerons, fuselage frames and various metal components completed to the stage where the aircraft can now be assembled. Built by engineer and all workmanship is absolutely outstanding. Large amount of Sitka spruce and GL1 aircraft birch plywood, brand new Cleveland wheels tyres and brakes, a lighting system - strobes and LED position lights (these last two items still boxed as they arrived from Aircraft Spruce and worth over A\$5,000 just on their own). Also a substantial work table, drawings and documentation; essentially the project includes everything for the aircraft to be finished with the exception of engine, instruments and cockpit plastics.

At an asking price of A\$12,500 ONO this project represents extraordinary value for money. For this cost you couldn't currently come close to purchasing all of the components that are included, yet alone the years of high quality workmanship that have gone into it.

Contact David Butler on 0418 250 763



A Jodel DR250

### HANGAR H2/J2 IS FOR SALE

18m x 16m. All steel construction.

Concrete floor. Dual entrance possible.

Water tank.

**\$105,000.**

Contact Anthony Baldry on 0427 267 237.





. . . . AND ON A MUCH BRIGHTER NOTE



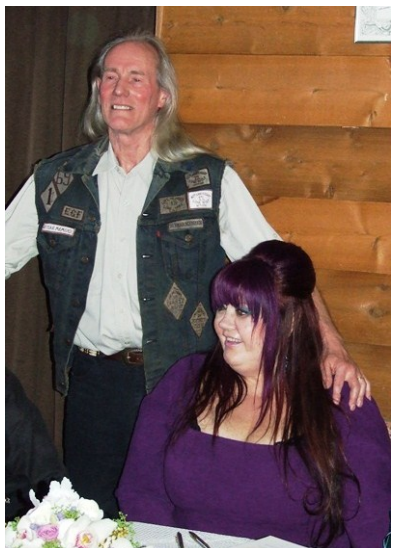
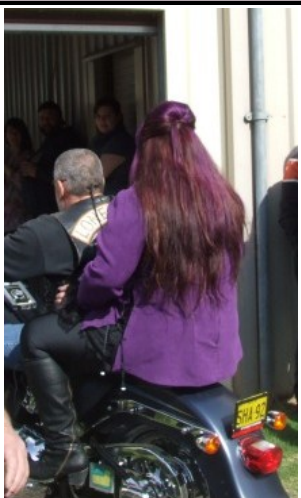
**Above: Fred Teiffel Turns 90.** Fred's son, Ken (to the left) and his daughter, Margaret (centre) are seen here helping Fred celebrate his 90th birthday in the clubhouse recently.

**Right: Nash Piling has just turned 80.** Nash is pictured here in Beijing during the club trip to China in 2006.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY GUYS**



**Adrien and Sy tie the knot and become Mr and Mrs Allsep**



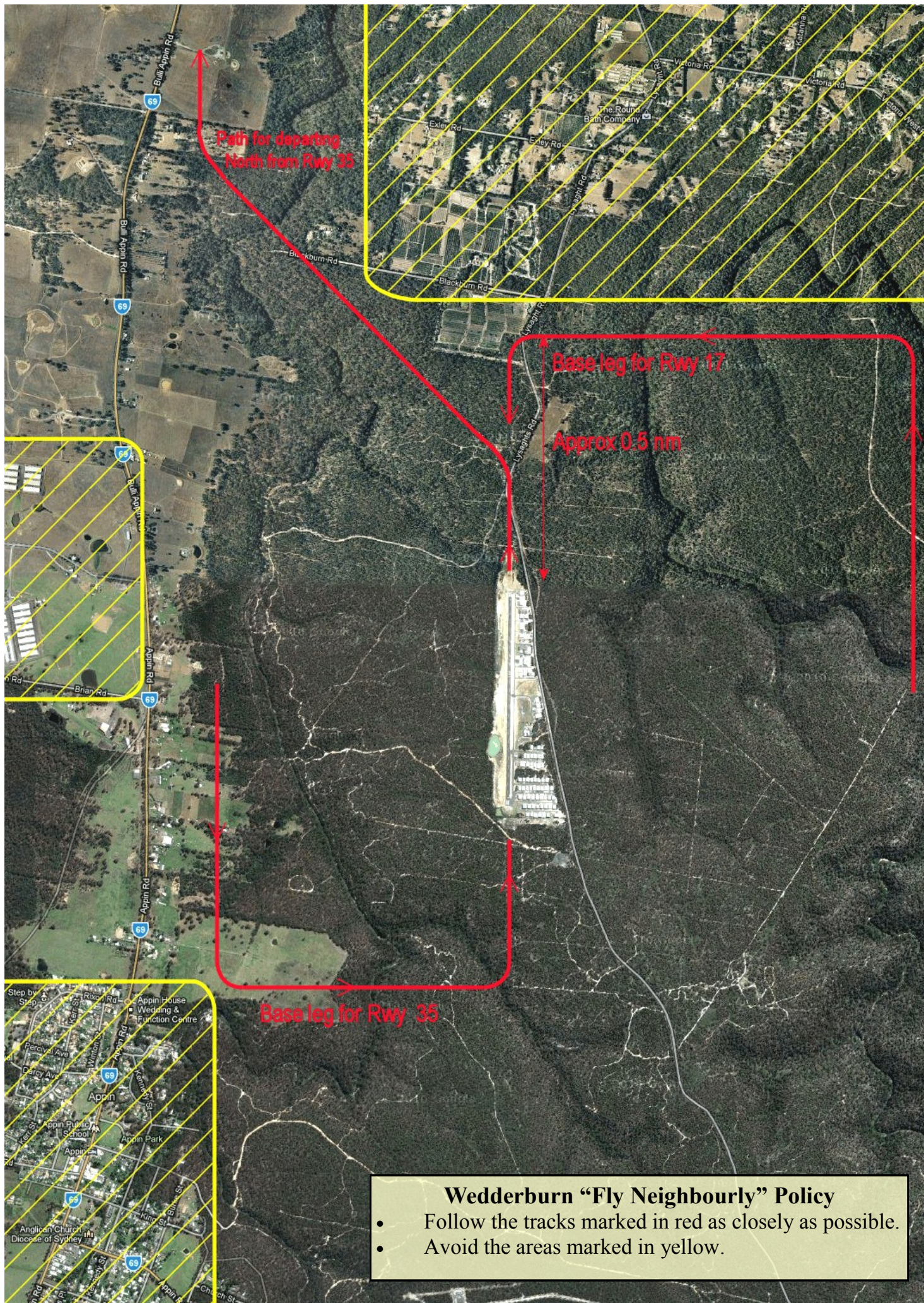
**Above (left to right):** She arrived at the wedding on the back of this Harley Davidson motorcycle, and he arrived in this uniquely presented armoured personnel carrier.

**Left:** the happy couple sign the marriage certificate in front of the 200 guests, and at **Right:** the cutting of the cake.

**Congratulations and good luck to you both.**







### Wedderburn "Fly Neighbourly" Policy

- Follow the tracks marked in red as closely as possible.
- Avoid the areas marked in yellow.