

# BRISBANE VALLEY FLYER

## DECEMBER 2025



Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield, Cressbrook - Caboonbah Road, Toogoolawah, Q'ld 4313.

Mike Hetherington Tel: 07 5427 0820, Email: [randomdudesfarming@hotmail.com](mailto:randomdudesfarming@hotmail.com)



Clubhouse upgrade. New Sign

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Peter Ratcliffe (Pres.)  
John Innes (Vice Pres.)

0418 159 429  
0417 643610

Ian Ratcliffe (Treasurer)  
Acting Secretary

0418 728 328  
0418 159 429

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Greetings Members,

That's a wrap for the year!

It has been a fantastic year with many new members joining us.

The AGM held a few weeks ago was very well attended. There were only nominations from the current board members, and after the vote, all were returned for the upcoming year. The only exception was our Social Officer, Jackie, who did not renominate due to work commitments. The entire board would like to acknowledge Jackie's dedication and contribution during her time in the role—well done, Jackie!

Our next gathering will be the Christmas Party, which will be held at the Grand View Hotel in Esk, just like last year. If you would like to join us, please contact the board so we can arrange table numbers.

If you're unable to attend, we wish you and your family a wonderful Christmas, and we look forward to seeing you in the new year.

Regards,

Peter Ratcliffe

Best wishes

Peter Ratcliffe

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Introducing our new executive:

President                      Peter Ratcliffe

Vice President              John Innes

Treasurer                    Ian Ratcliffe

Technical Support          Bill Oates

Membership Officer        Doug Scott

Footnote. The President says,

“With the amount of work gone into this new rec. area, I want to feel the real thing “.

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Hello to The FLYER readers. This bloke has been shanghaied to give us a bit of an aviation life story. This is an auotbio. The Editor just caught him unprepared and he has shared hi aviation life with us. He's not a bad machinist, so give him a hearing. We think he can fly passably and he is seen at WATTS on a clear day. The Editor Thanks Coby for his time and willingness to share. And he recently made the leap toward married life with having Zoe accepting an engagement ring.

G'day, My name is Coby. I've been called in to do a bio for a bit of fun.

September 1992, a 747 and DC9 traded paint on the ground at Heathrow and a B2 drops a bomb for the first time. I too came out of the bomb-bay that month, what a time to be born. I can't pinpoint a first time there was an interest in aviation. Standing in the horse paddocks on the farm, aircraft flying west from Caboolture would often pass over. What I remember is getting a book from my grandfather on trains. Outside of the mechanical descriptions and operations, the nomenclature of the subject never really stuck. When I opened a book about aircraft, it stuck like a bug on the windscreen. Finding out later, someone in my family owned a J3 Cub living 6 miles from the Lockhaven factory, I like to think it's just in the blood.

I think most people who have an affection (infection) for aviation would say the worst time is when you're not flying and the best is when you are. Speaking to real life, I was in a Citabria on an 8-minute flight to get it home. I had fuelled and flown aeros multiple times that day, so when I looked up at the gauges mid cruise only to see them both on the big red 'E', I became Panakin Skywalker, giving myself a crash course in engine mixture management, proper pre flights and once it was back in the hangar, a good ass kicking.

There are too many reasons to 'what's the best part of flying'. I value sleep too much for dawn patrols but right on sunset in the golden hour, when everything smooths out, that's my little sweet spot to fly in.

Earning the nickname Too Tall early on in my aircraft maintenance career, originally it came about quoting 'We Were Soldiers' but I've lived up to it by groaning about ducking under low wings and trying to squeeze into small cockpits, sometimes reaching under my knee to use the control column.

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Standing at 5' 21", when someone changes the standards of cockpit design and realises 4 more inches back and down goes a long way, the motion potion is on me.

Having made the decision to build an airplane, I chose to scratch build Bearhawk Companion. Where the opportunity arises to buy parts where I deem the cost to out-way the risk of doing it wrong. Most of the time however, I give it a go and see what happens. I have a good size scrap bin but also a bigger knowledge bin so I consider it a win. Life gets in the way sometimes but having recently got back to it, it's a good feeling to lose track of time in the shed. My partner doesn't always agree when my dinner goes cold. The bothersome bit is balancing the triangle of perfection, time and skill. Also making a decision on something now that might backfire or be a waste of time 5 years down the track, can leave you up late in analysis paralysis.

What else could you observe me doing in the wild? Well.... Flying Air Cadets around in DA40's, welcoming people to the church of tailwheels and grass strips, looking through the top of the canopy to look at the ground, ringing steel with some cowboy pistols, machining and fabricating, renovating and a blasting guitar riffs in a band, are some of the activities I generally partake in.

I have no catch phrase to leave you with but I have this pearl of wisdom for future knuckle draggers (mechanics). The three aircraft torque specs derived from the English, Germans and Russians. Finger tight, Guttentight and Brokenov. Leave your Ugga-duggas for the cars. 3<sup>rd</sup> article





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We know Yanks love acronyms, but they are good at it.

First question

1. Before stepping out of the Clubhouse on the air side, what is the American FAA acronym for personal checklist. IMSAFE
2. The A in the acronym is to be watched carefully after the night before with traditional Aussie rehydration. What is A? a) apples b) ALCOHOL c) aerobics exercises completed d) aircraft located
3. In a short answer – Hypoxia? a) too much oxygen b) not enough oxygen c) too much carbon dioxide d) not enough carbon dioxide
4. Hypoxia – How high can it happen? a) at any height b) at 10,000' altitude c) at an altitude which causes an insufficient oxygen supply to the brain d) during a rapid climb
5. Now which of our bodily systems will keep us straight and level during flight.? a) eyes b) ears c) seat of pants d) all of the above
6. VFR flight can have illusions. Not counting illusions of grandeur at being PIC, name a dangerous type of illusion that can cause a loss of height (vertical distance from terrain) judgement? a) light to dark b) G lok c) somatotropic illusion d) tunnel vision
7. In a predicament (?) rapid breathing can become a physical difficulty. What is the technical term? a) puffed out b) panting c) hyperventilation d) gaspers
8. You have overcome the jimmy brits and settled down, but this big word is found in your head when in reduced visibility. Knowing this word may help? a) staggers b) somatotrophic illusion c) snow blind d) goggle eyes
9. You're out of reduced visibility instantly, surprise! Maybe you're not where you expected. Are you startled? What effect will this have on you physically.? a) increased heart rate b) confusion c) adrenalin rush
10. Approach not as planned. Feeling a bit razzed. Fatigue can cause decisions to?  
a) Be rushed b) to take the simple option c) leave out a few steps to make it to the hangar quicker d) not be made at all
11. A narrow runway can appear?  
a) Scary b) longer c) farther away in the flare d) shorter
12. Do you remember the 3 parts of operating an aircraft while airborne you were surely told as a student?

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a) Aviate b) navigate c) communicate d) obviate

13. Everyone is down and clear. You're flying again tomorrow. Which physical manifestation do you have, but cannot change quickly and will affect your /performance tomorrow?

a) Partying instinct b) exhibitionism c) circadian rhythm d) nihilism/paranoia

Answers to December quiz.

1. Illness

Medication

Stress

Alcohol

Fatigue

Emotion

2. b

3. c

4. c & a

5. d

6. a

7. c

8. b

9. c

10. c

11. d

12. abc

13. c



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## FLIGHT OF INDECISION

How do things seem to become inadvertently linked. Following is a list of the “things”. Aircraft operation, Rural Fire Service Volunteering, hard times in farming, a Surgeon with a heart of gold, and an intermittently failing magneto. That will do! The list could be longer. See if you can find the connection before reading on.

I did not think I would be writing articles for the FLYER, however Rob Knights suggestion that I follow a link on the Interweb he sent me has left me with two options: Ignore the whole thing or stick my neck out and do something useful with it. The thing is, this is about people, not really the mechanics of committing flight. And I am also reminded that my bit of time in a Mental Health course does not qualify to give advice. So, this is a discussion prompter. I would love to hear pilots discussing this topic one day. Some of my angles on this come from the list above, some from text books, some from the dreaded internet podcasts/reels/whatever's. A lot of it comes from being around for 68 years and slowly realising that a call for help is not a sign of weakness. It is, when used with care, the most sensible option for the situation.

To the accident scenario: A very capable man in his 50's departed with 5hr.30min fuel. The flight terminated disastrously so close to the safety of the runway, it is apocryphal. If he had a winning door prize or a 1,2, or 3 in a Melbourne Cup sweep, his luck would have been better. It was so fine a line. Engine failure on late final at IFR minimum it seems. Being over a wooded area meant there was a tree in the right place at the right time and CRASH! The report shows the aircraft was set up for glide, at minimum speed. From my Night VFR training, more people walk away from night time engine failure than daytime engine failure because the only thing to do is set up the glide and wait. There is no chance of the disastrous attempt to stretch the glide or a late wrenching turn. This fellow had done everything to try to overcome the situation.

Now to take a step back. How did the aircraft and pilot end up in the situation? In north eastern USA, airfields abound. Why hadn't he landed earlier? He had overflown a large military airfield where approach guidance would have been available, IF he had declared an EMERGENCY.

Now we have arrived at the guts of the matter.

When would you declare an emergency when your fuel has dangerously empty tank/s.? How about considering, when does a farmer declare an emergency when the bank balance is dangerously low? When does a Rural Fireman declare an emergency when in personal danger or the job is too big for the team? When does a Surgeon who knows he can save a limb or life call it and say, 'I cannot achieve what I set out to do'? And lastly, if pretake off checks show an intermittent out of limits rev drop, how long do you persist before saying "I don't know, I will seek advice"?

All this is why I said this was a people discussion, not an aviation safety lecture. All this is about us, people, the human factor. If you look through accident reports it not unheard of to find the pilot who becomes overwhelmed. Sometimes a Board of Directors can't make a decision so it's not surprising that one person under pressure struggles.

So, my time is up. I began this because the original prompt was a podcast, all spoken, no pictures. I had to convert some into written text. I am also aware that Australia is much more isolated than the USA, however I know of accidents here that would have been preventable if the emergency had been called sooner. I have seen farmers go to pieces from the effect of keeping Mum about their situation when it seems a call to the SALVOS or someone non-judgmental would

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have helped. Many harvester and machinery failures have had me rattled, but there has always been time to get help. Pilots don't have the luxury of time. Asking for help should never be considered a weakness.

So, it is now some hours later and I have pondered my musings. I would like to add more, not too much more, but more relevant to aviation. Any readers can search the net for examples of aircraft accidents related to indecision. As sport aviators, many decisions have to be made alone. Single pilot IFR gave an acquaintance grey hair very early in life. He liked the job. He was settled. It was sometimes tiring. It was always alone. Pilots are by nature, are high achievers. This does not mean we can handle everything all the time, every time. Within a few hours of beginning the research for this article, I realised many pilots became not so much afraid of failure, but feeling within themselves they should be able to handle this situation. Nobody makes a departure call expecting to call in an Emergency, but if it does arise, as soon as you are sure, call it and call it loud.

Better to be there to shout the bar than not be there at all!

FOOTNOTE: At the recent meeting, all of the BVSAC Members watched how the progress of the storm wreaked havoc at ESK on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> November. It would affect the planned flight of one of our own members and this brings all that is in the article to life. All pilots stress levels rise when thunderstorms or cb tops to xx,xxx ft is in the forecast. Fortune favours the brave, but these thunder storms don't take any prisoners. Our mate just had to wait.

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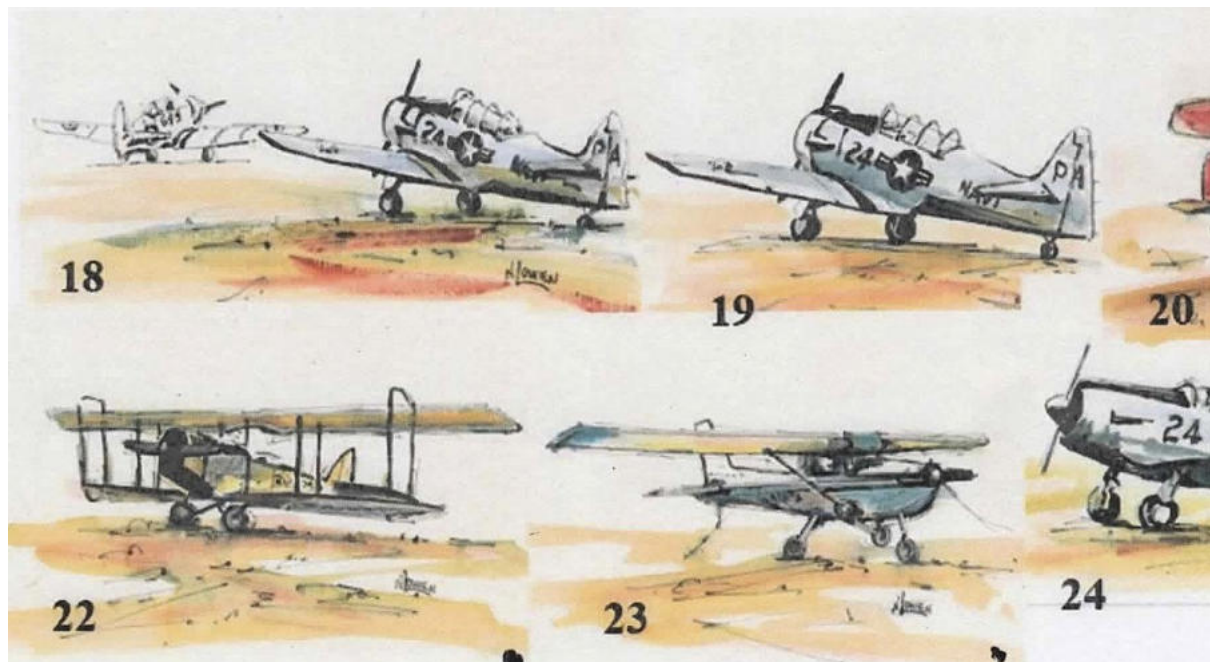
G'day Fellow Aviators,

On a recent visit to the Lowood Open Door Art Gallery to help Kerry (significant other) with Lowood High School "stuff", down in a corner I spotted a colourful radial engined 1930's aircraft rendered in oils. It was very eye catching. Postcard size works are not usually eye catching. Maybe it was a STINSON... can't be sure. Anyhoo, after some enquiry, we found the artist is a lifelong KILCOY person who finds aircraft delightful subjects. Noela Lowien by name. After calling her and chatting I found she has an affection for WATTS BRIDGE and airshows. Her work is available through FB, email etc.

Like all artists, she'll not be retiring to a penthouse at the Gold Coast on sales, but one never knows, do one. We could ask her to provide some of her works to the BVSAC Club House for Members, perhaps for Christmas cards and so I will put a contact detail on here: Noela Lowien;  
[njlowien@gmail.com](mailto:njlowien@gmail.com)

Art work can capture a moment we want to remember or illustrate something never experienced.

Here is a sample, everyone will know this one, however Jabbies, Moths, Yaks etc. are also subjects



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Final Report \*\*\*

N7756N Piper PA-28-180 Hollister California 10 SEP 2025

3 No Injuries

Pilot Flight Time: 152 hours (Total, all aircraft), 38 hours (Total, this make and model)

The pilot reported that while on final approach to the runway, the airplane was high and fast, and he performed a slip to “get more on speed.” During the landing flare, the airplane floated significantly down the runway, and the pilot-initiated a go-around by applying full power. During the go-around, the airplane's wheels touched down about 2/3rds down the grass runway and the pilot increased back pressure, and the airplane became airborne, when he noticed that the airspeed indicated about 45 knots, and that the stall warning system light was mostly on with some intermittent flashes. The pilot stated that he thought they did not have the airspeed to fly out of ground effect and decided to abort the go around by reducing the engine power to idle after the airplane had cleared an obstacle. Subsequently, the airplane landed hard, bounced, and flew another few hundred feet before it impacted a dirt mound and nosed over. The pilot added that throughout the entire accident sequence, he had 40° flaps selected. The airplane sustained substantial damage to both wings and the vertical stabilizer. At the time of the accident, the pilot was landing the airplane on runway 05 with wind from 250° at 11 knots.

The pilot reported that there were no pre accident mechanical failures or malfunctions with the airplane that would have precluded normal operation.

Probable Cause and Findings:

The pilot's delayed go-around from an un-stabilized approach that resulted in an impact with terrain.



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### Aircraft Books, Parts, and Tools etc.

**Contact Rob Knight on mobile – 0400 89 3632**

#### Tow Bars

| Item               | Condition      | Price   |
|--------------------|----------------|---------|
| Tailwheel tow bar. | Good condition | \$50.00 |

#### Propeller Parts

| Item   | Condition | Price         |
|--|-----------|---------------|
| Propeller spacers, Assorted depths, all to fit Rotax 912 UL/ULS propeller flanges                    | Excellent | \$100.00 each |
| Spinner and propeller backing plate to suit a Kiev, 3 blade propeller, on a Rotax 912 engine flange. | Excellent | 100.00        |

**For all items, Contact Rob Knight on mobile – 0400 89 3632**

**Or email me at:**

[kni.rob@bigpond.com](mailto:kni.rob@bigpond.com)



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### **Aircraft for Sale** **Kitset - Build it Yourself**

**Reduced Price**  
**\$1,480.00 neg**

#### DESCRIPTION

All of the major components needed to build your own aircraft similar to a Thruster, Cricket or MW5.

- Basic plans are included, also
- Hard to obtain 4" x 3" box section, 2 @ 4.5 metres long.
- Wing spar & lift strut material - 6 tubes of 28 dia. x 2 wall.
- 20 fibreglass ribs plus the moulds,
- 16 spar webs plus the moulds,
- 2 fibreglass flat sheets for the leading edges - 4 metres long x 1.1 metres wide.
- A ballistic parachute,
- A 4-point harness,
- Set fibreglass wheel pants, and
- More.



*Box sections and tubes*



*Support parts – Harness etc.*

**A very  
comprehensive  
kit of materials**



*Ribs, tubes, spats, etc*

Colin Thorpe. Tel: LL (07) 3200 1442,

Or Mob: 0419 758 125



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## Aircraft Grade Bolts for Sale

Aircraft AN Bolts - \$500

AN3, AN4 & AN5 bolts, all bagged  
- 500 bolts in total.

Today's cost – approximately \$5,500

A list can be supplied if required

**Contact Colin Thorpe –**

**0419 758 125**



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### **Sky Dart Single Seat Ultralight for Sale.**

**\$4,500.00 NEG**

A single seat, ultralight, Taildragger. Built in 1987, this aircraft has had a single owner for the past 18 years, and is only now I am regretfully releasing it again for sale. I also have a Teenie II and am building another ultralight so I need the space.



*The landed Sky Dart III rolling through at YFRH Forest Hill*

TTIS airframe is 311 hours, and the engine, TTIS 312 – is just 1 hour more. Up-to-date logbooks available. 2 X 20 litres tank capacity. To be sold with new annuals completed.

It is easy to fly (for a taildragger), and a great way to accumulate cheap flying hours.

Call me to view, Bob Hyam,  
Telephone mobile 0418 786 496 or  
Landline – 07 5426 8983, or  
Email: [bobhyam@gmail.com](mailto:bobhyam@gmail.com)



*Landed at McMaster Field after my flight back from Cooma just West of Canberra. In the cockpit with me is GeeBee, my dog*

### **Single Seat T84 Thruster, disassembled and ready for rebuild.**

I have a T84 single seat Thruster project in my hanger at Watts bridge.

The fuselage is on its undercarriage, the wing assemblies are folded up and the skins are with them.

Included is a fully rebuilt Rotax 503 dual ignition engine and propeller.

And, most importantly – the aircraft logbook!

**Asking price \$5000.00**

Contact John Innes on **0417 643 610**

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