

SPECIAL  
POINTS OF IN-  
TEREST:

- "Festival of Flight"  
2009 update
- Hangar 7
- Painting The Winter  
Retreat

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# Australian Vintage Aeroplane News

ISSUE 211

APRIL - JUNE, 2009

## "Festival of Flight" 2009 update by Craig P Justo

Time stands still for no man and thus the "Festival of Flight" will soon be on us once again. Planning is well advanced and this will ensure that the event is conducted in a professional but relaxed atmosphere and that we will be welcoming of all who might attend! Whereas the title of this organisation may be seen to indicate that QVAG's interest in aviation is restricted to Vintage aircraft only, I will take this opportunity to dispel this perception. QVAG welcomes and encourages all facets of aviation and all who have an associated interest. We do not discriminate and we certainly do not display favour to specific aircraft types nor interests that one might have in the pursuit of aviation related activities! This year's "FoF" is scheduled to be staged over the period **29 through 30 August** inclusive and if current advice materialises, we once again stand to see one of the most diverse and impressive collections of aeroplanes to gather on Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield!

Indeed and as a pre-event appetiser, we are extremely optimistic of attracting a RAAF Caribou for the last time and due their long association with the Airfield, if this eventuates, then this will be a somewhat poignant opportunity for folk to get up close and personal with one of the last of the Vietnam veteran aircraft to serve with the RAAF. Besides the possible attendance of a Caribou, we should see more radial powered aircraft on the field at the one time than we have ever seen previously. From Torpedo Bombers through to the Trainers, some of these aircraft have not graced the grass at Watts Bridge previously and if all goes to plan, they will include a couple of machines that will be making their first public appearance in Australia. Additionally, I can guarantee that there will be a few more surprises in store that will whet the appetite of all, even those with little if any interest in aeroplanes in general.

As an event that is staged outdoors, we are always at the mercy of the weather and of some concern is that this Winter is predicted to be the wettest that we have experienced in many years. Whereas we can't control that, I am sure that all will harbor the same hopes as I do, that being for Watts Bridge to be blessed with sunshine in the days preceding and over that weekend. At this point in time and due the heavy rain in recent times, the Airfield and surrounding districts are a lush green splendour to view.

Irrespective of what if any aircraft that you might own, we would like to see you at Watts Bridge over that period so please do put this on your agenda. And please spread the word amongst your colleagues, friends etc. that as always, Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield will be the place to be during the last weekend in August. Please check out the QVAG Website ([www.qvag.org.au](http://www.qvag.org.au)) for all details.

Besides the aircraft, we are expecting to welcome a number of Vintage Vehicle Clubs once again and the attendance of these folk and their vehicles adds to the overall spirit of the event. Additionally, we are also expecting the Cadets from RAAF Amberley based, No.208 Squadron. In variance to previous occasions when we have hosted the Cadets, on this occasion they will be totally self reliant and of importance due our switching to Tank water, they will provide their own ablutions facilities!

Catering arrangements are in place as are many of the logistics that we require to support the event. If the Weather "Gods" look down upon us favourably, we do look forward to catching-up with all at "FoF" 2009 and until then, take care, safe flying and best wishes as always.

© CRAIG P JUSTO - JUNE 2009

# Caboolture Airfield Open Day - 2 August 2009

**Caboolture Airfield Open Day**  
 2nd August 2009  
 10.30am to 4pm

- \* Military Vehicles
- \* Vintage Motor Vehicles Concourse
- \* Gliders-QLD Ultra Light Assoc.
- \* Parachute Display - HAM Radio club
- \* RAAF Cadets (March-Off)
- \* Recruiting Display - Vintage Group

**WIN A RIDE**

- \* Food & Drinks
- \* Memorabilia
- \* Models
- \* Books & DVD's
- \* Visiting Aircraft
- \* War Birds

**Giving History a Future**

07 5499 1144 **McNaught Road Caboolture** 07 5495 4951

**Attention all aircraft enthusiasts**

**1<sup>st</sup> Prize**, a flight in a P51 Mustang

**2<sup>nd</sup> Prize**, a flight in a CAC Wirraway

**3<sup>rd</sup> Prize**, a flight in a Motorised Glider

**\$5 Per Ticket**  
 Drawn 2nd August

All proceeds support Caboolture's Aviation Museums

Beaufort Restoration Group's restoration of a WWII Beaufort Bomber

**For Tickets Hangar 106**      **For Tickets 07 5495 4951**

The Caboolture Warplanes Museum Inc

## President's Message

You will have received my emails of late. Thank you for your messages of support, attendance at working bees and socialising activities, offers of sponsorship for Festival of Flight and other matters. All support, no matter what, is of value to the Group as a whole and is warmly welcomed. If you have any ideas, a particular talent, or any positive comment you would like to make, please feel free to contact me.

This year's Festival of Flight is shaping up to be well attended as you will have noted in Craig Justo's report. However, it is also a time to reflect on the strength of members who we have lost in recent times. It is a time that we must all pull together, show our strength, and move forward in remembrance. There is no doubt this will be an emotional event that we all will be conscious of in our own way.

Some of you may have seen the article on Brisbane Extra this last week. It was initially intended the story go to air a couple of weeks prior to Festival of Flight, however, the show closed last Friday. In the circumstances, it was great the story was run. Thank you to Mal Shipton who spent time in recording the segment - the closing credits have resulted in some enquiries being made.

This issue of AVAN is extensive. Thank you to everyone who has contributed stories and pictures. This really does demonstrate the strength of the group as we move forward. Remember if you have a story idea please feel free to contact the Editor - details below.

All of you - take care.

Kind regards - Frank

## From the Editor

Hi everyone. I'm a bit late with this edition as I've been pre-occupied with other matters.

With AVAN your news is to be reported as well as news from around Australia and New Zealand. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any ideas about topics that could be included, or would like to submit an article, please give me a call on 0409 640 781. Thank you for your contributions.

Remember, if I hear you are or have done something special, interesting, or just committing aviation. Just say yes I'll share what I'm up to! AVAN needs your input!

Safe flying to you all.

Karen

**AVAN needs you!**  
**It's your news.**  
**Support your fellow aviators.**

**Dedicated to the airworthy preservation of Australia's historic aircraft**

## VALE - Joseph Peter Vellacott Esquire (14 March 1948 - 25 May 2009)

On 25 May and at sixty-one years of age, regrettably, Joe Vellacott finally lost his battle against cancer. In keeping with his strength of character, he fought this insidious disease for three years and throughout that period of personal trauma; he always maintained a positive outlook. That it eventually claimed his life is yet another of life's obscene injustices!

I was deeply saddened to learn of the untimely passing of Joe and whereas I was expecting the news, it nevertheless came as a profound shock. At a Farewell Service conducted in Boonah's All Saints Catholic Church on 28 May, over two hundred mourners consisting of family and friends gathered to pay their last respects to this gentleman. Amongst the mourners were eleven QVAG Members. Following the Service, Joe was laid to rest at the Boonah Lawn Cemetery.

Born, raised and educated in the Boonah area, at an early stage of his life, Joe was bitten by the aviation "bug" and in pursuit of his compelling desire to be involved in aviation, he established his career by joining the Royal Australian Air Force. Trained as a Flight Engineer, he was subsequently posted to No.36 Squadron to manage the systems on the RAAF's tactical airlifters (C-130A and C-130E Hercules). During his service life, he "rode" the Hercs around the world and due to Australia's involvement in the South-East Asian conflict, between May 1968 and February 1969, his regular destinations were the military Air Bases in Vietnam's combat zones. After resigning from the RAAF, Joe took up a Flight Engineer's position with a humanitarian relief operation in the Sudan. This was a short-term contract yet the time he spent on those ops was as rewarding as it was terrifying at times. Indeed, on one flight in particular, the C-130A experienced a catastrophic engine failure and the ensuing fire threatened the safety of the aircraft and all on board. It was only through Joe's diligence and professional management of this perilous situation that the aircraft wasn't lost.



Photo: Craig P Justo

At the same time, Joe had successfully applied for a position with Hong Kong based "Cathay Pacific Airlines" and this saw him engage in the commercial side of aviation and managing the systems on B-747 aircraft. Following his retirement from "Cathay Pacific", Joe settled on the Gold Coast and set about establishing a Joy Flight business that operated under the evocative title, "Barnstormers Australia".

I first met Joe in November 1996 when the late Malcolm Long kindly provided me with the introduction. Joe had just acquired a magnificent new build Waco Super YMF Classic biplane. Due to his operation being based at Coolangatta Airport, Joe and the Waco became a familiar sight over and around the Gold Coast beaches and the Tweed River Valley. Joe's delight in flying the machine was such that although he had set-up the business to earn money, I doubt that he did and the reason for that was his overwhelming generosity! Whereas he willingly accepted payment from the tourists who wanted to take in the scenic beauty of the beaches and the McPherson Ranges, there were many occasions when he refused to accept payment for his services. Those occasions were when he was booked to take a sick child, elderly person, service veteran etc. etc. on a cheer-up flight! That he did those flights for gratis was the mark of the man and as he would say, "payment wouldn't go close to providing me with the same compensation as that which was conveyed by the beaming smiles on their faces after the flight"! Besides, he just loved to strap into his Waco and go flying and he delighted in sharing this experience with others. That was clearly evidenced on the many occasions that Joe attended QVAG events in the Waco. The distinctive sound of the Jacobs R-755 radial would always announce his entry into the airspace around Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield and then the always immaculately presented "blood" red machine would come into view.

Since joining the Queensland Vintage Aeroplane Group in 1997, Joe had been a stalwart supporter and had enjoyed each and every occasion that he attended our events. Even though he was gravely ill at the time, Joe attended the Tribute Fly-In that was staged on 14 December 2008. On that day, he didn't arrive in his beloved Waco but rather, as a passenger in Mike Long's classic C-185. However, he nevertheless enjoyed the day immensely and relished the opportunity to socialise with like-minded folk and appreciate the machinery on the Airfield – just as he had done on many previous occasions. Sadly, Joe's passing will now deny his many friends of the pleasure of enjoying his company and the sight of his magnificent Waco overhead and/or in the circuit of one of the Airfields that he regularly visited.

A true gentleman in every sense of the word, quick of wit and compassionate, yet not one to suffer fools. I was privileged to count Joe as a very good friend - a person whose integrity and humility I admired and respected greatly. I will always remember Joe as an extremely competent and thoroughly professional aviator and one who was committed to the furtherment of Vintage Aviation in Australia.

**To you Joe, blue skies, tail winds always and forever flying!**

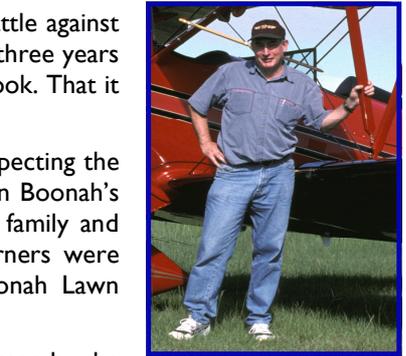


Photo: Craig P Justo



Photo: Craig P Justo

# 2009 QVAG Calendar of Events

**EVENT:** FOF Working Bee **VENUE:** Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield  
**DATE:** To be advised  
**CONTACT:** Frank Ragonese on 0409 640 781

**EVENT:** "Festival of Flight" 2009 **VENUE:** Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield, Toogoolawah  
**DATE:** Saturday & Sunday 29 & 30 August, 2009  
**CONTACT:** Craig Justo on 0407 740 734 or check [www.qvag.org.au](http://www.qvag.org.au) for updates

**EVENT:** End of Year Function **VENUE:** Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield  
**DATE:** To be advised  
**CONTACT:** Frank Ragonese on 0409 640 781

*"Always check the QVAG website for updates [www.qvag.org.au](http://www.qvag.org.au)"*

Additional events to be advised.

# Wide Bay Australian International Air Show 2009

Want to do something exciting over the weekend 3-5 July 2009? Check out the Wide Bay Australian International Air Show 2009 in Bundaberg.

For more information check the website: [www.widebayairshow.com.au/](http://www.widebayairshow.com.au/)



# For Sale / Items Wanted



As a service to members we are introducing an aviation for sale/items wanted section. If you have something for sale, or want to buy or find something, please forward all the details to me for inclusion in the next edition of AVAN.

## For Sale

Gipsy Major tapered crankshaft. Recent x-ray with all paperwork as serviceable. Ready to fit. Certified measurements available. Well below cost: \$5,750. Ph: Warwick Henry, 0417 771 563, or Email: [whenry2@bigpond.com](mailto:whenry2@bigpond.com)

## Wanted

Member, Ed Field is trying to source a S. G. Brown (not Brown Bros!) Aero Turn Indicator Model "A" (air driven type) for inclusion in his DH.60M Gipsy Moth restoration. Should any of our members and/or readers know of the whereabouts of an example of this instrument, Ed would be especially pleased to hear from you.

Ed can be contacted on the following:  
**Mobile: 0404 213 537 or Email: [efield2@bigpond.com](mailto:efield2@bigpond.com)**

**The Brown Aero Turn Indicator is playing a big part in Civil Aviation progress**



**Mr. C. W. A. Scott used the Brown on his epoch making flight to Australia when it helped him to overcome all weather conditions.**

TWO MODELS—The two types of the Brown Aero Turn Indicator are illustrated here. Model A (above) is air driven, and Model B is battery operated. Used in conjunction with the ordinary compass, the instruments warn the pilot instantly when he is turning off his course, by means of the pointer which moves to the left or right. In addition, in the electrical model a red or green light appears.

**Aero Turn *Brown* Indicator**

S. G. BROWN, Ltd., Western Avenue, N. Acton, W.J.

KINDLY MENTION "THE AEROPLANE" WHEN CORRESPONDING WITH ADVERTISERS.

The Brown has been installed on many aeroplanes which have made long distance flights that will become part of Civil Aviation history. This instrument was chosen because it had been proven to give greater accuracy in flight, to remove risks in fog, and to ensure a straight course by day or night, or when conditions necessitated flying "blind." That is why





## Hangar 7 at the old Eagle Farm airport site by Roger Marks, Bob Livingstone, & Mike Adams

Brisbane has a few aircraft on static display in a couple of locations – the *Southern Cross* at Brisbane Airport and Hinkler's aircraft in the Queensland Museum – but it's the only Australian Capital city without an aviation museum.

A small group of people, including two members of QVAG, are endeavouring to change this state of affairs.

The Eagle Farm Aviation Society Inc (EFAS) has been formed through Aerospace Heritage Queensland (AHQ) to manage Hangar 7 at the old Eagle Farm airport site.



Photo: EFAS

QVAG AFM is now synonymous with Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield near Toogoolawah, i.e., a site that's **'out of the City'**. QVAG, like most AHQ members, will benefit through maintaining a representative display in Hangar 7 to be readily seen by the expected high city and tourist visitor numbers. The hangar and environs are now owned by the Brisbane City Council. EFAS understands BCC will embrace an adjoining area in its development of a Heritage Precinct.

Built by the USAAF in WWII, Hangar 7 was a secret area in which the Allied Technical Air Intelligence Unit collected and studied parts of Japanese aircraft in order to obtain information on production capabilities, production rates and even from which locations the Japanese were sourcing their raw materials. This allowed the orderly targeting in due course of both factories and mine sites.

More obvious was the restoration to flying status a Zero, two Oscar fighters, and a Tony, all from airframes captured as airfields in New Guinea were over run. These aircraft were test flown in USAAF markings from Eagle Farm before being flown in mock combat against the major Allied fighter types. Information gained was collated and passed to combat pilots in the Pacific.

Post-war, the hangar was used for a series of aviation and non-aviation-related activities, culminating in its current use as an office and storage area by a construction company working on BCC projects in the area. In addition to Hangar 7, the Heritage Precinct will encompass the 1830's Eagle Farm Convict Women's Prison and Factory, a site of national significance, and the WW2 Allison aero engine test stands. Of added interest is the not too far away site of the Colmslie Flying Boat Base.

Local historical societies will have a strong interest in the area, and EFAS intends that Hangar 7 will become the nucleus of a community resource centre: namely the Eagle Farm Community Heritage Centre. The Nundah and Districts Historical Society is an affiliated member of EFAS.Inc.

EFAS does not expect to own larger artefacts such as airframes. As part of Aerospace Heritage Queensland, EFAS expects that it will be possible to obtain aircraft within AHQ on a rotational loan basis. These may be aircraft which cannot be displayed by their owners for various reasons..

EFAS maintains a website at <http://www.hangar7.org.au> (or simply Google "The Legend of Hangar 7") where membership forms can be downloaded and the Society contacted. We are actively recruiting members and would particularly welcome QVAG members.

## Calendar of Events - general

<b>EVENT:</b>	Wide Bay Australia International Air Show	<b>VENUE:</b>	Bundaberg Regional Airport
<b>DATES:</b>	3-5 July, 2009 inclusive	<b>WEBSITE:</b>	<a href="http://www.widebayairshow.com.au/">www.widebayairshow.com.au/</a>
<b>CONTACT:</b>	Ph: (07) 4155 0044 or Email: <a href="mailto:info@widebayairshow.com.au">info@widebayairshow.com.au</a>		
<b>EVENT:</b>	Beaufort Restoration & Warplanes Museum Open Day	<b>VENUE:</b>	Caboolture Airfield
<b>DATE:</b>	2 August 2009		
<b>CONTACT:</b>	Ralph Cusack Ph: (07) 5495 4951 or Email: <a href="mailto:info@beaufortrestoration.com.au">info@beaufortrestoration.com.au</a>		
<b>EVENT:</b>	MAAF Fly-In 2009	<b>VENUE:</b>	Oakey Army Aviation Airfield
<b>DATES:</b>	3-4 October, 2009 inclusive	<b>WEBSITE:</b>	<a href="http://www.army.gov.au/history/museums.htm">http://www.army.gov.au/history/museums.htm</a>
<b>CONTACT:</b>	Helen Bawden Ph: (07) 46917666		

# The Winter Retreat - *restoration update*

If you've been to Watts Bridge recently you will have witnessed the changing exterior of the clubhouse. A number of members have volunteered to sand, patch, mend, replace, plug holes and paint the exterior of the building with further maintenance being done inside. Good progress is being made. Thank you to all the members who are helping with this project. Without your help this would a much more difficult exercise. Following are some photos of the progress with much more exterior work still to be done.



## News from New Zealand - Classic Fighters 2009

Over the Easter Weekend 10-13 April 2009 a small group of QVAG members and friends attended Classic Fighters in Omaka, New Zealand. A week earlier there was an early snow, however, the Easter weekend saw beautiful sunny days and crisp cool evenings. A few captured images to remember....



## “Pythons” Practice Day - Watts Bridge 14 June 2009!

On Sunday 14 June, your Group hosted the “Pythons” Formation Flying Team at the Clubrooms!

The majority of the folk who comprise the Team are QVAG Members and thus it was a real pleasure to welcome them and their guests to QVAG’s facilities and hospitality. The reason for the “Pythons” visit to Watts Bridge was so as they could brush-up on their routines before their appearances at the Wide Bay International Air Show. This event is scheduled for the weekend of 04-05 July with Bundaberg Airport being the venue!

Although some members of the Team are based at other Airfields, essentially the “Pythons” are based at Caboolture Airfield, so the original plan was for them to depart Caboolture with an expected arrival at Watts Bridge around 0830 Hrs. However, a thick blanket of fog settled over Watts Bridge just after 0630 Hrs. and the Airfield remained shrouded in the mist until 0930 Hrs. (sound familiar?). Having been in comms with Des Porter, the “Pythons” delayed their departure until they received a call to say that the fog was lifting. That call was made just after 0930 Hrs. and the first of the formations (05 x Chipmunks) arrived overhead at approximately 1010 Hrs. The Chippies impressive arrival was soon followed with that which was just as impressive - the Dragon, Genairco and a Tiger Moth entering into the circuit.



Photos: Craig P Justo

Following their arrival, the Team members made themselves comfortable in the Clubrooms, availed themselves to a warm beverage and commenced to conduct the brief for their first practice session of the day. With this completed, they then walked through the formations before strapping into their aircraft! The Dragon, Genairco and Tiger Moth launched first and they were immediately followed by the Chipmunks. With the aircraft formed-up in their respective slots, the sight of the aircraft was a true spectacle and the sound of nine Gipsy engines was stirring. The first practice session was duly completed and once again, the crews retired to the Clubrooms to conduct a de-brief and re-brief for the next flight.

With this behind them, they set off once again and repeated the first exercise. It was readily obvious that they were now settling into the routine with some very tidy formation work resulting.

After again returning to the Airfield, the crews were treated to lunch as they progressed yet another de-brief and re-brief for the final practice session. That too was a very successful session and whereas a couple of the participants headed home at the completion, others returned to the Airfield for the final de-brief. At the end of the day, all participants were extremely pleased with their polished performances and indeed, the hospitality that was extended to them.

I will take this opportunity to proffer my sincere appreciation to the “Pythons” for utilizing QVAG’s facilities and indeed, Robyn Bernhardt! Robyn is tireless in her efforts and commitment to the Group and the work that she did to prepare and deliver the catering was commendable. As always, the catering was to an exceptional standard and I have subsequently received a number of Emails from the crews that have conveyed their appreciation.

In the matter of QVAG's facilities, in a personal sense, it was especially pleasing for me to see them being utilised as originally intended. Indeed, I was extremely impressed with the “Pythons” activities as they demonstrated Vintage aviation at its best. And furthermore, those activities were conducted at an Airfield that is perfectly suited to those operations with "user friendly" environs, support facilities and like-minded folk in attendance! This is the express reason that Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield was re-established all those years ago, QVAG set-up its HQ there and many others have seen the benefits and followed suit! In my vanity, I would go so far as to say that this Airfield is now Australia's premier location for those who enjoy recreational flying and aviation in all its facets!

I would like to think that this won't be a one off occasion and I would relish the opportunity to welcome the “Pythons” to Watts Bridge and avail them to QVAG's hospitality once again. Of course, this invitation extends to all who wish to utilise the facilities at any time. In that regard, I very much look forward to catching-up with all at Watts Bridge in the not too distant future!

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Photo: Craig P Justo

## Memoirs! *Barefoot to Boeings* By Brian Crane

Childhood incidents were many, but clarity of recall varies at this age.

A childhood fault suffered by a lot of us Cranes, was small mouths for our number of teeth. Removal was the only solution in those days. It was necessary for me to have 5 or 6 teeth pulled at around age 5. Quite an adventurous day, raining cats and dogs, must have been a cyclone, and the red soil Wadeville Road was impassable from the farm to the school. Can recall the 3 mile walk with Ma and Pop, barefoot and carrying "good clothes" under raincoats and umbrellas, from the farm to the school to catch the school bus. We changed our clothes in the carrier's truck, parked there due to the untrafficable road. We transferred to the Lismore bus in Nimbin, which was a long wheelbase job, canvas hood with roller blind side curtains. Waterproof it was not. The visit to the dentist, a Mr. Bennett, a kindly old chap, was uneventful and I cannot recall any after effects. The journey home was along the same way, the last sector being by torch and lantern light. Nobody seemed to think anything of it, typical of life in those days.

My brother, Ray was 3 years younger and I can recall the undeserved jealousies I felt towards him. Naturally, he was always taken to town when Ma and Pop had to go. One day when I was about 4, I decided to walk to Lismore to join them. The fact that it was 27 miles and I wasn't sure of the way didn't seem to discourage me.

At the gate of the farm was a kerosene tin in the wooden packing case of the day. I can remember "oil-canning" this tin and then starting out to follow the road. Fortunately, after travelling about 100 yards and adjacent to the Wadeville cattle dip, I met sisters Alison and Dorothy on their way home from school. They were on horseback, and with a group of friends. They picked me up, no fuss and nothing was made of it. Naturally I got the odd "hiding" (spanking), but cannot recall getting any I didn't earn.

When I started school I didn't find this an enjoyable time. This was no fault of the teacher or school, merely of my own attitude to the restrictions felt by the classroom confinement.

The school at Wadeville was a one teacher unit, the Master being old Jim Braham. He was a good hard working teacher, who did his best with us rough bush kids who all had our minds predominantly outside the classroom.

My scholastic achievements were generally above average, which surprised everyone, especially me, as the classroom item claiming my greatest attention was the clock drawing too slowly towards 3 p.m. I can remember a set of books in the meagre library having a lot of technical information in them. Spent so much time in my lunch hour reading them over the years that old Jim Braham came in one day and booted me out onto the playground.

I can never remember forming any particular friendships at school, as I didn't seem to have much in common with most of them. Their interests didn't seem to go beyond displaying pugilistic skills or their collection of birds eggs. Violence has always been repugnant to me, as Pop had made our place a bird sanctuary and the collecting of eggs was naturally forbidden. Besides that, I always had a natural love for wildlife, even in those days, something my fellow pupils never seemed to possess, causing quite a few arguments. However, this did not preclude hunting rabbits, which were an enormous pest in those days.

With school, I tended to be slower with writing and such things as mental arithmetic than the rest of the class. This learning slowness has stayed with me, but once the subject is grasped it stays with me. In a small school it worried and embarrassed me, but I learnt to overcome this with time.

The distance to school was about 2 miles, which we walked bare footed and happily, but the homeward journey was always faster. It was a great adventure, this ability to walk to school, and it is such a pity that security risks these days preclude this.

School of course had a horse paddock for use of those with horses, and criticism of a pupil's horse was an invitation to fight. Of course it was also used for exchange of dirty yarns and the even occasional "social encounter" so I was told.

Routine has always bored me, and I was always looking for ways of thinking and acting differently to the throng, which at times has created problems for me. Unless you "run with the stream" you seem to be often considered a misfit, and I think that still applies to me.

Pocket money was made by trapping rabbits for their skins, and later we purchased ferrets which was enormous fun on weekends, as well as profitable. We used to stretch and dry the rabbit skins on bent wire, and pack them into a sugar bag, then railed them to Sydney to Pitt, Son & Badgery for sale. Ginger, Black and Multi-coloured skins brought a premium price, and it was always exciting to get back a cheque of your very own, even though it was only small. When we were trapping we used to set the traps late afternoon, doing 3 "rounds" the last one about midnight. We had a Kelpie cross dog called Terry, who, when he could hear a rabbit in distress, would go on his own and kill it with one bite, leaving the rabbit for us to collect in the morning.

## Memoirs! *Continued...* By Brian Crane

I can remember being on my own on a midnight round, way over the back paddock, it was pitch black and I fell over putting out the kerosene lantern. I had no spare matches, so had to feel the cow tracks with my bare feet to get home.

Ferretting was an art form. When you found a warren you had to locate all the exits and look particularly for the one panic / escape hole, which was always hidden by grass and used only for this purpose. Nets were set over the holes, the ferrets introduced to the warren and you could hear the rabbits on their way out. Sometimes the ferret caught a rabbit, had a feed and went to sleep underground. The only solution was to either smoke them out or block all the holes and come back next morning to call them out. They would be looking for their milk by then.

None of us ever had much in the way of ready made toys, only Christmas time for these, not like today's kids. However, we didn't mind as we had plenty of imagination and materials available. We made entire model farms from chips from the woodheap giving us houses, farm sheds, fences and even made farm machinery and used cobs from the corn we shelled as cattle. It was amazing the realism we had with the road networks as well, but now and again a draught horse called Prince would let himself into the orchard where we had our model farms and he would put his great hooves through them. We accepted this as a natural hazard and repairs were quickly made.

I always had a love of aviation and boats, and the adventures of aviators and seafaring men of the 1930's fascinated me.

The model boats were generally made from 3 in. x 2 in. pine, complete with masts. Nails and wire completing the rails around the deck. Floating in that creek at Wadeville, I had enormous imaginary adventures for my crews. I remember making a biplane with a 3 ft. wingspan using pine, nails for interplane struts, "Zambuku" ointment tins for wheels and a strip of suitably bent iron for a propeller which spun noisily and realistically in the wind. The imaginary adventures that the pilots of that plane had all over the farm made Biggles sound like a wimp.

When I hear these days that children are bored and have nothing to do, I have little sympathy. To us the days or school holidays were far too short to do everything we wanted to do.

Very little harm came to us despite our adventures. I often wonder, when I think of us negotiating creek banks near the road, shin deep in lantana leaves, why we were never bitten by snakes. Perhaps the poor buggers were too terrified of these feral kids.

When I was about 8 or 9, I decided to wag school for the challenge and adventure. I used to take suitable toys and play in the old road area until I saw the kids coming home, and then I would make my own way home. Trouble was, once I started I had to keep it up, but I should have known I would come undone, and after 3 weeks I certainly did. Old Jim Braham intercepted my sister, Dorothy, when she got off the Nimbin High School bus at Wadeville school. She used to walk home from there. He asked her why I hadn't been at school, and she conveyed this message home, with the resultant startled upheaval. I was escorted back to school the next day, with the usual expected discipline. Although quite a hero amongst my fellow pupils, I always felt most embarrassed about such a stupid incident. I think it was only the challenge that prompted me to do it, but it was an incident that left quite a mark on me. I tried hard to forget it, but school colleagues kept asking for details and keeping it alive.

Pop used to rent a house at Ballina for 4 weeks every year. The people who owned this enormous house were named Blanch. Enormous high-set place, glassed in verandahs and on Lighthouse Hill, almost opposite the cemetery. Access was through tea-tree scrub to a lake. I forget the name of it and the associated dunes. It was a short walk to Lighthouse Beach, where on weekends a Gypsy Moth would offer joy rides and I think this was probably Keith Virtue. At East Ballina the golf links used to double as an aerodrome, and I can remember a high winged aircraft, yellow in colour, and the older Captain calling out "Anyone want a fly?"

There was another place we used to stay at opposite the golf course. Think they must have been friends of Ma. and Pop and we stayed there when my sister, Adrienne, was born. I was fascinated that they had friends who used to visit with their own aeroplane, although I never saw it, and they would simply fold the wings, push it across the road and into the garage. With the Blanch house, Pop, Ma and we younger children would spend 2 weeks and then swap with the older ones for the remainder of the time.

My older brothers, Fred., Charlie, Doug., and Jim, were fed up with riding their horses to the Lillian Rock tennis club, waiting all day and not getting much tennis. They decided to make their own court, using plough, horse drawn scoop, carting the surface material, in a horse drawn "tipping" dray. They had to cut into the bank near the house by about 3 ft. and fill the other end, and then cut and erect poles for the fence, sink net posts and attach the wire. As young blokes with no experience they must have had enormous initiative and energy to achieve this. They called the court "Chevy Chase", and this became the name of their competitive team. This court gave very long service, still in use in the 1950's.

In later years, the shade created by a great tallowood tree one side and a jacaranda the other gave superb picnic spots. The only problem was, in the days before chemical treatment, the "chipping" by hoe of the surface grass at the start of the season. Shamefully, my brother, Ray and I, possessing a pedal car each, used to ride them round the court, having great fun "getting bogged" when wet, with devastating effects on the surface. After several warnings brother, Charlie, carried our pedal cars into the paddock of corn adjacent to the court. It took us 2 days to find them and it served us right!

## Memoirs! *Continued...* By Brian Crane

Two visitors we looked forward to were Uncle Roy and Auntie Mabel (Pop's brother). He was a wool buyer with Dalgety's, and used to arrive in the Company car, a dark green Hudson Terraplane with black mudguards. To us kids a luxurious, soft-riding car, and to get a lift to school was a real "one upmanship" to the other kids. Auntie Mabel always brought minties, and Uncle Roy used to love walking the farm lighting the heaped up logs that Pop always saved for him. (Neighbours knew by the smoke that "Roy was visiting.")

Another uncle we welcomed as kids was Uncle Sandy, Mum's only brother. Quite a larrikin. Always gave us sixpence each. My older brothers used to treat him as an equal, and used to talk of when they went walking along the creek. To test suitable swimming holes he would grab one of the entourage of kids following and throw them in to test it. We always thought him the "ants' pants" as he was so much fun.

### Chapter 2

The start of World War II had a great effect on our district, like so many country areas. Many farms went out of dairying, people moved and others joined the Services. Wadeville school dropped below the minimum pupil criteria (I think this was 7) and Jim Braham was posted to Burringbah school near Murwillumbah. To solve the problem, my sister, Dorothy, took on the position of "Subsidised Teacher", whereby the Education Department paid the salary of the teacher. As she was only 16, this was a pretty daunting task, and she had some pretty difficult-to-discipline kids (including me.) In this role she discharged her duties well, and the school inspector was high in his praises of her. Another pupil, Tom Fredericks and I did one year's correspondence lessons of the first year of High School under Dorothy's supervision.

Some of the things about Wadeville school come as pleasant thoughts. Regular visits from a "fruiterer" with a large touring car who had such goodies as grapes, apples and other fruits in season. He also had ice cream for threepence (3c) and GIANT ones for sixpence (6c). I always spent all my pocket money. Occasional visits from showmen such as camel rides and a ventriloquist were welcome diversions, as were the regular visits from the various Protestant ministers (with the Catholic kids waiting outside of course.) When a Catholic Priest visited these children had their R.E. under the trees outside.

By donation of petrol ration coupons from each family, the local stock or cream carrier was able to arrange a trip to the Nimbin "pictures" every 6 months (cost about two shillings each.) Our pick up points were the various schools / halls so we had to ride our horses to there. Enormous fun sitting on planks on the back of the truck singing our heads off. Even having to locate and catch our horses on the way home failed to dampen our sheer joy over this real treat. When we got a little older, the necessity to travel for tennis or cricket matches took a similar direction.

My parents always insisted on us getting the best education possible under the circumstances, even when we were reluctant students. They realised the value of education, even if we were slow to do so. In my case, a decision was made to send me to Nimbin Central School boarding with Horrie and Jean Stephens for 2 years, and then the last year at the boarding house near Jack Pearce's garage.

Transport to "Nimbin" was a challenge too, as there was no bus service. We had a lovely quiet old horse called Dolly. Pop bought her for Six pounds. She did not look much, but she had a lovely nature, taking "two-up" to Primary school for years. (She was great on the farm too. You could just drop the reins and she would graze around there all day. I used to ride her to the Wadeville school, leaving her in the horse paddock on Monday mornings Ray and Adrienne would take her home after school.

Later I used an aged horse (of 20 years) called "Gyppo". Her name came from the fact she had a lovely pony head and body, but a long stock horse neck, making her look like an Egyptian horse. Hand reared on the bottle, she was spoilt, coming up to the house steps when hungry. For some inexplicable reason, she disliked women, tossing them when she could. I used to ride her bareback to Wadeville school, simply tie the reins to the throat strap, and let her go. She would not stop till she got home. A few neighbours at times tried to catch her for fun, but she always put her ears back, head outstretched, and teeth bared and slipped around them.

She was also a wonderful natural stock horse. Let the reins loose and she would locate the best hidden new calf. Bringing home a cow and calf was a joy and she loved it. Would "nip" a reluctant cow, but push the calf gently with her nose, and should the calf get under her she would stand still till it got out. When handling stock she could wheel and shoulder equal to any modern day quarter horse.

From the school, would take a short cut down through Fredericks' place, and then across to McBurney's, where I would meet up with Bill McCollum's Ford Model A cream truck. Even though I paid two shillings (20c) for the ride to Nimbin, I was expected to assist with loading and unloading at every farm gate enroute. I actually, quite enjoyed it, as it made me feel quite grown up. On Monday I was always slightly late for school due to this arrangement.

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## How not to lose your sanity when flying with a toddler *by Jackie Bolsover*

It is one thing to fly economy on long haul flights on your own. But it is a totally different experience when you have to do it with a small child about to turn two!

When they are babies it isn't so bad. Of course there is always the issue of trying to ease the pressure on their ear drums and of course the inevitable vomiting of all liquid intake. But they will sleep in the aircraft bassinet at least.

When they start moving around is when the problems really start.

Don't bother buying magazines or a book to read. It just won't happen. Yes do read through the inflight entertainment guide to see what movies you are probably NOT going to watch. Don't count on any assistance from the inflight crew - the airlines have cut costs dramatically in recent years and therefore cut back to minimum crews.

Do accept any assistance you might be offered by other passengers! Yes Dorothy it does still happen albeit rarely.

If your child is losing the plot and having a 'hissy' fit just sit and watch and ignore the tutt tutts from the other passengers. After all do you know them? Will you ever see them again?

Be prepared to run forward and aft along the aisle chasing your little angel who thinks it's a great game. You will get to know the set up of the galleys quite quickly.

Your child will also find amusement in taking the controls for said inflight entertainment system and relentlessly press the light switch and the call button.

If you have never seen how the other half fly in business or first class don't worry, you will soon get a good look in both areas as children don't take any notice of curtains trying to block access to the upper classes!

As for inflight meals, just don't even contemplate the thought of eating! At best you will have a drink or two. And no, alcohol doesn't make the whole experience any better.

When you arrive at your destination, you will want and need to have a drink, something to eat and a long sleep. Oh and try not to think too much about your return flight back home!

## Next Issue

The next issue of AVAN will cover the following topics and more:

- Festival of Flight report
- *Memoirs!* By Brian Crane
- And more!

If you have any ideas about topics that could be included, or would like to submit an article, please drop give me a call on 0409 640 781.

## Membership Matters

Annual membership is due shortly. Members will shortly receive an email regarding membership.

If you know someone who wants to join please refer them to the QVAG website ([www.qvag.org.au](http://www.qvag.org.au)) for membership information.

*"New members  
makes our  
Group stronger"*