

SPECIAL POINTS  
OF INTEREST:

- "Festival of Flight"  
2009 Co-ordinator's  
report



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ISSUE 212

JULY—SEPTEMBER, 2009

## "Festival of Flight" 2009 Co-ordinator's report *by Craig P Justo*



### From Fog to Fabulous!



Given that this was the eighteenth "Festival of Flight" event that QVAG has staged, it would be reasonably expected that we are prepared for any contingency and with regard the planning, setup of infrastructure etc, I believe that it is fair of me to say that we are very much on top of this nowadays. And Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield, well it was just a picture perfect sight of verdant splendour and the laborious pre-event preparations by Rod Mills and Peter Freeman on behalf of the Watts Bridge Board of Management made it most welcoming! However, no amount of planning and preparations will ever allow of us to beat the weather. Although we were blessed with blue skies throughout the weekend, the unexpected density of the fog on the Saturday morning and then severe wind gusts on the Sunday provided a large measure of inconvenience to attendees – especially pilots!

But of importance and some relief, QVAG once again staged a safe and enjoyable weekend and thus has maintained its proud and enviable history of staging safe and incident free events. Feedback received here would indicate that with few exceptions, folks had a very enjoyable time and when coupled with the safety aspects, we really can't ask for any more! And it is fair to state that this was the most successful event that QVAG has ever staged with aircraft attendances up, as were the visitors! Recession – what recession?

Whereas the air around Watts Bridge was clear at 0400 Hours on the Saturday morning, by 0600 hours a light fog had developed and by 0630 hours, such was its density that it had the consistency of "pea soup"! But Watts Bridge was not the only area affected as the fog bank had blanketed most of the South East and thus folks at Caboolture, Toowoomba, Redcliffe, Archerfield, Kilcoy, Gatton etc. were ground

bound. But at 0930 hours, conditions began to improve and just after 1010 hours, the CTAF came alive with the familiar inbound calls, "All Stations Watts Bridge" as aircraft began appearing from all points of the compass. What followed was virtually a mass arrival of aircraft and it suffices of me to say that the marshaller's had their hands full for about an hour. Things then settled down with the frequency of aircraft arrivals being normal for the event that in turn, lessened the intensity of the marshaller's workload!

On that Saturday and in defiance of the late start to the day, the "Festival of Flight" attracted a huge range of beautiful aircraft and the sight of this mass of Vintage, Warbird, Classic and modern aeronautical machinery on the Airfield was truly impressive. And a first for the "Festival of Flight" and Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield was established on that day when we hosted no less than four AT-28D Trojans, all of which are confirmed veterans of the South East Asian conflict and particularly, the "Secret" War that was run by the CIA in Laos. The Saturday was also significant as two aircraft made their Australian public debut. Mal Shipton's magnificent Waco YKS-7 (VH-YKX) and Ron Ennis' Tiger Moth (VH-UXD) arrived and were quickly placed under the scrutiny of the Concourse de Elegance judges! Mind you, with such an array of fine machinery in attendance, the judges had no easy task in front of them!

Sunday dawned as a beautiful day but this belied that which would cause some of the pilots a challenge – especially those operating tail-draggers. The wind started to rise around 0730 hours and progressively, got worse with gusts to approximately 25-30 knots at times.

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## “Festival of Flight” 2009 Co-ordinator’s report by Craig P Justo ....continued from page 1

But it did not stop the intrepid aviators who chose to attend the event and indeed, the 12/30 and 03/21 Runway alignments were being used in unison and in a professional display of airmanship by the pilots, at no time was there a conflict of operations. The day kicked-off in grand style with the much anticipated arrival of a DHC-4 Caribou from RAAF Base Townsville’s No.38 Squadron. No.38 Squadron and its Caribous have a long association with the “Festival of Flight” and Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield and as they are now being withdrawn from the RAAF inventory, as you might imagine, the Management Committee was especially keen to have an example on the Field for the last time whilst in RAAF service. And No.38 Squadron did not disappoint, as the example that graced the grass at Watts Bridge was none other than A4-210. This particular Caribou served in Vietnam longer than any of its brethren that currently remain on strength and indeed, its service period in the Vietnam theatre extended over a period of three years and four months. A true Warbird that has continued to serve this nation for the past forty-five years and personally, I delighted in hearing the “raucous symphony” that was produced by the machines P&W R-2000s!

And then there was more aircraft entering into the circuit and thus the numbers of the machines on the Airfield were bolstered once again. A significant sight appeared overhead with the arrival of two Grumman TBM-3E Avengers in close formation and again, this established another first as we had never before hosted two Avengers (VH-MML and “TBM”) at the event. Then to eclipse the record set on the previous day, Anthony Freer brought along his T-28B Trojan to swell the number of type to five in total (VH-DPT, “TRO”, “ZSH”, “ZUC” and “ZUK”).

Continued page 3



Courtesy: Peter Freeman

## President’s Message



You will already have received my email about “Festival of Flight” 2009 and the forthcoming Annual General Meeting. It has now been 4 weeks since Festival of Flight. Thank you to everyone who participated over the weekend and to those who worked tirelessly to make the event one of our best yet. The “Festival of Flight” 2009 Coordinator has written a full report and is published in this issue of AVAN. I trust you will enjoy the pictorial journey and the list of trophy winners. Bring on 2010!

A reminder that the QVAG AFM Inc Annual General Meeting is scheduled for Saturday 24 October 2009 at 2:00pm at The Winter Retreat, Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield. I will be forwarding details on nominations for committee positions and an agenda in the next couple of weeks.

Hope you can make it to the Museum of Australian Army Flying *Rotors, Wings, Wheels flyin* this weekend 3-4 October.

Best wishes for the next 12 months – see you at Watts Bridge. All of you - keep safe.

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.

What a fantastic Festival of Flight! Everyone involved in the preparations and those who flew and drove in over the weekend should be very proud of what was achieved this year. Congratulations to you all.

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**

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

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



**PS Have you counted how many times the QVAG AFM logo appears? Why? Because you can!**

## “Festival of Flight” 2009 Co-ordinator’s report by Craig P Justo *continued from page 2*

To gain an appreciation of just how privileged QVAG is and the high regard in which the “FoF” event is held by owners and pilots, the machines in attendance included a CA-18 Mustang, Harvard, Winjeels, Nanchangs, YAK-52s, L-5s, Chipmunks, Tiger Moths, Austers, DH-84 Dragon, Moth Minor, Genairco Moth, Cessna O-2, Zero Replica (from the “Tora, Tora, Tora” Movie), Beech H-18S (USA registered), Focke Wulf FWP-149d, Grumman Panther JG-2 Replica! Complimenting those and not specifically mentioned previously were the various aircraft types from the Cessna, Piper and Stinson stables. Over the two days of the event, I am moved to say that we were treated to a fantastic sight and one that will remain in my thoughts and hopefully, yours for a very long time.

As an overview, Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield was adorned with aircraft types that spanned eighty years of civil and military aviation in Australia and the aircraft in attendance were second to none in their presentation and indeed, variety! Although I have made mention of specific aircraft, I have not meant to single out a particular aircraft for special mention so I will confine my comments to a simple statement of fact - all were worthy and magnificent representatives of their particular marque. And as importantly, they showcased the scope of the aeronautical heritage that we have in the South East corner of Queensland and in many respects, throughout Australia.

Traditionally, the “FoF” includes activities that are an integral part of the event – the Aeromart, the Dinner, the Concourse De Elegance and the Flight Raffles! Guy Kendell kindly convened the Aeromart once again and as previous, it stimulated a lot of interest. The Saturday evening Dinner was a sell out and it is important for us to recognise the effort of the caterers who did a wonderful job of preparing a large variety of culinary “delights” for consumption throughout the entire weekend. Joylene Tidmarsh and her team of helpers from the Brisbane Valley Christian Church laboured throughout both days of the event and the standard of food was exceptional in both quantity and quality and the service was exemplary.

And yet again, Graham Orphan traveled from New Zealand to take in the event and offer his expertise as a judge for the Concourse De Elegance. Given the quantity and quality of the machines in attendance, he shouldered an onerous responsibility and as one might imagine, he was left to agonize over the choice of Trophy winners. But at the end of the day, choices were made and the recipients of the various Awards were well deserved. And yet again, the Flight Raffles as kindly provided by Kim and Cameron Rolph-Smith and Des and Kathleen Porter to provide a significant activity of interest to all attendees. These folks generously offered a ride in their aircraft as a Raffle prize and as previous, this was extremely well patronised. In variance to previous years, Des and Kathleen also offered seats in the Dragon for a Raffle draw on the Saturday and this saw five winners occupy seats for an enjoyable trip over the Brisbane Valley. Then the Sunday draw was conducted at the lunch time function and this resulted in seven very keen “riders” strapping into the AT-28 Trojan, YAK-52 and Dragon respectively. Many thanks Kim, Cameron, Des and Kathleen for your very generous support of the Group! Thank you also to John Sinclair and Robyn Bernhardt for their donations to raffles that were also drawn following the flight draw.

And we once again enlisted the assistance of various local organisations to assist us with the conduction of the event. Foremost amongst these was the Toogoolawah branch of the State Emergency Service (SES) who, in return for a share of the gate takings, provided many additional services to support the event. Besides bolstering our manpower resources, the SES provided equipment and expertise that alleviated the need for us to source these from other suppliers.

As most attendees would have noticed, we attracted additional commercial interests to this year’s event and several charity exhibitors. Coffee, Hat and Cap and Pilots Supply vendors were complimented by impressive displays from the Museum of Australian Army Flying and Queensland Air Museum. And then there was the added attractions provided by the Vintage and ex Military Vehicle Clubs. Again, the interest in this area has grown considerably and it is my understanding that we welcomed no less than one hundred and sixty vehicles that fitted into those categories over the weekend. And this year we hosted two Squadrons of Cadets that were from No.208 Squadron AAFC (RAAF Base, Amberley) and No.223 Squadron AAFC (Caloundra) respectively. The visit by the Cadets to the “FoF” event was initiated in 2006 and this was to provide these budding aviators with the opportunity to appreciate aviation at its best! And feedback from the respective Officers in Command confirmed that they did exactly that!

Then there are the acknowledgments for the assistance provided by various organizations and individuals. Once again I will mention Rod Mills and Peter Freeman, as these gentlemen were instrumental in the preparations to reopen the 12 – 30 Runway alignment to its original length of 5,000 feet! This ensured that there was an adequate runway length available to accommodate any contingency. Andrew Johnson of the Somerset Regional Council, Sergeant John Cumner and Senior Constable Steve Putland of the Toogoolawah Police assisted immensely with the approval that we sought to effect the temporary closure of Silverleaves Road. Without their kind consideration and assistance, we would not have been able to make the full length of Runway 12 – 30 available for operations.

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## “Festival of Flight” 2009 Co-ordinator’s report by Craig P Justo *continued from page 3*

Besides those organisations and individuals, the work that goes on “behind the scenes” to make QVAG events so successful and an enjoyable experience are considerable. I firmly believe that it timely for me to acknowledge some of these folks. Frank Ragonese and Karen Guest (QVAG President and Secretary respectively) put their life on hold for a considerable period of time to facilitate the lead-up work for the event! Their contribution was invaluable and I can’t begin to imagine just what the event would have been without their combined efforts! Leyu Fentie assumed responsibility for organising the Dinner function and the bookings. As with the great deal of the efforts that go into the staging of the “Festival of Flight”, this was a huge undertaking and I cannot overstate the work that Leyu put into this. The positive to come from her efforts was the success of the night and thus the effort was rewarded!

Besides those folks, we must acknowledge the ongoing support of QVAG Members. Lynette Zucolli, Graham Orphan, Scott and Kylie Williamson and Patrick Harrington – all of whom made significant contributions through providing the magnificent array of Trophies that were on offer to this year’s participants. And John Sinclair and Ross Stenhouse who once again allowed of us to utilise the Hangar One facility. Then there is Robyn Bernhardt, our “Chief” of catering whose efforts in that area and others is quite simply, tireless. Robyn spent many weeks organizing liquid refreshments, shopping and preparing food for volunteer workers over the weekend.

Indeed and as on previous occasions, it behoves of me to acknowledge the selfless efforts of all who chose to give so much of their time and resources to ensure the event’s success and of course, those of you who bought your aerial treasures for all to enjoy. That some of you did both was commendable and very much appreciated. To all and sundry who contributed to the event and made it the success that it was, I will take this opportunity to extend my most sincere appreciation for your selfless dedication to the objectives of the Group.

As opposed to an Air Show, this event is a pure Fly-In and thus no payments are made to the owners of aircraft that attend the event. To those folk who supported the “FoF” 2009 by bringing your aeronautical treasures for all to enjoy, I will take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt appreciation for your unselfish dedication to the furtherment of Vintage, Classic, Warbird and General aviation in this country. Yours was a commendable gesture and rest assured, it is greatly appreciated by the organising body. Due the support from all over many years, I can state unequivocally, the “Festival of Flight” is now the largest pure Fly-In (nil Air Show component) to be staged in the Southern Hemisphere and it has a long tradition of being a quality event that has earned the Group an enviable reputation and respect.

The actual conduction of the “Festival of Flight” is best described as a “work in progress” and we will continue to strive to implement improvements for future events. Of significance, it became readily obvious that we need to establish a dedicated Ground Frequency for marshaling etc. To that end, Ron Dunn has been extremely helpful in facilitating this and I am pleased to advise that he has secured a Frequency for use over the “FoF” weekends. This has yet to be formalized and as soon as this is completed, we will begin to get that information out to all. The suggestion of a Ground Frequency was only one of a number of suggestions provided in post event feedback and, as they are considered and accepted by the Management Committee, you will be advised of their implementation.

To the future and I will beg your indulgence and in so doing, proffer my personal views. To move forward, it is my belief that you must remember and reflect on times past. When the “Festival of Flight” was in its infancy, the event attracted a few Tiger Moths, Austers and a few one offs of type. Over the years, I have seen the parking areas overflowing and aircraft types in attendance that I would never have imagined in my wildest dreams. As a few examples of the latter: Sea Furies, Fiat G-59B, Mustang, YAK-9, YAK-3, Boomerangs, Wirraways, Avengers, Trojans, Lockheed 12a, DHA-3 Drovers, Beech 18s, Antonov AN-2 and yes, to this very day, we still attract Tigers and Austers. That this event has attracted and continues to attract aircraft of such significance (and in a couple of instances, the only airworthy examples of type currently flying in the World to this day) is true testimony to the owner/operators commitment and it is that which underpins QVAG’s activities in a broad sense. There is no doubting that we are truly blessed and privileged! Given the mention of just those few examples, as there seems to be little let-up in folks acquiring and restoring aircraft types, I would imagine that there would come a time when we will see other exotic types of aircraft attending QVAG’s premier event on the Australian Aviation Calendar. When those occasions materialize, they will serve to broaden the proud history of the “Festival of Flight” and Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield.

So yes, we will do it all again next year and while it is fresh in your memory, please pen 28-29 August 2010 into your diary. Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield will be the place to be on that weekend and I certainly look forward to seeing you there on that occasion. Indeed, hopefully I will catch-up with you in the intervening period. Until next time, take care, safe flying and the very best of wishes to all.

# “Festival of Flight” 2009 *A pictorial journey*



Courtesy - Craig P Justo



Courtesy - Craig P Justo



Courtesy - Craig P Justo



Courtesy - Craig P Justo



Courtesy - Craig P Justo



Courtesy - Craig P Justo



Courtesy - Brad Hurley



Courtesy - Brad Hurley



Courtesy - Brad Hurley



Courtesy - Brad Hurley



Courtesy - Brad Hurley



Courtesy - Brad Hurley



Courtesy - Brad Hurley



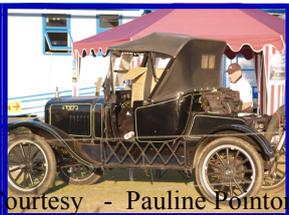
Courtesy - Brad Hurley



Courtesy - Pauline Pointon



Courtesy - Pauline Pointon



Courtesy - Pauline Pointon



Courtesy - Pauline Pointon



Courtesy - Anonymous



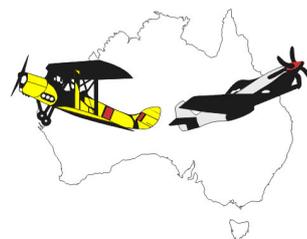
Courtesy - Anonymous



Courtesy - Anonymous

# “Festival of Flight” 2009 - *The trophy winners*

The “Festival of Flight” 2009 trophy winners are as follows:



Category	Donor	Winner	Registration	
Best Tiger Moth	Classic Wings Magazine	Ray Vuillermin	VH-RVE	 Courtesy: Craig P Justo
Best Chipmunk	Classic Wings Magazine	Mark Bolsover	VH-SHX	 Courtesy: Brad Hurley
Best Auster	Vintage Aeroplane Services	Grayden Hilton	VH-JSG	 Courtesy: Craig P Justo
Best Classic Piper	Classic Wings Magazine	Bob Tait	VH-MBT Piper Pacer	 Courtesy: Brad Hurley
Best American Vintage	Scott Williamson	Steve Searle	VH-NOY Stinson OY-1	 Courtesy: Brad Hurley
Reserve Champion	Classic Wings Magazine	Anthony Freer	VH-ZSH T-28B	 Courtesy: Craig P Justo
Best Yak/ Nanchang	Scott Williamson	Steve Newing	VH-CJE	 Courtesy: Craig P Justo
Best Homebuilt	Pacific Flyer	John Gross	VH-JLG Panther Replica	 Courtesy: Pauline Pointon
Longest Distance Flown	Australian Flying Museum Bus	No. 38 Squadron, Townsville	A4-210 Caribou	 Courtesy: Craig P Justo
Grand Champion	Classic Wings Magazine	Mark Carr	VH-CZB Moth Minor	 Courtesy: Craig P Justo

## “Festival of Flight” 2009 - The trophy winners



Category	Donor	Winner	Registration	
Best Private Restoration	Classic Wings Magazine	Ron Ennis	VH-UXD Tiger Moth	 Courtesy: Craig P Justo
"Classic Wings" Most Magnificent Machine	Classic Wings Magazine	Mark Shipton	VH-YKX Waco	 Courtesy: Craig P Justo
Guido Zucolli Memorial Trophy for Best Ex Military Aircraft	Lynette Zucolli	Peter Thompson	VH-XXE Winjeel	 Courtesy: Craig P Justo

Category	Donor	Winner
Don Kendell Trophy for Individual Effort in Aviation	Guy Kendell	Matthew Denning
Bob Copas - Lace Maxwell "Spirit of Aviation" Memorial Trophy	QVAG AFM Inc.	Cameron Rolph-Smith

## 2009 QVAG Calendar of Events

**EVENT:** Annual General Meeting      **VENUE:** Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield - The Winter Retreat  
**DATE:** Saturday 24 October 2009 - 14:00 hours (2:00pm)  
**CONTACT:** Frank Ragonese 0409 640 781

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

“Check the QVAG website for updates

[www.qvag.org.au](http://www.qvag.org.au)”

## Calendar of Events - general

**EVENT:** MAAF Fly-In 2009      **VENUE:** Oakey Army Aviation Airfield  
**DATE:** 3–4 October, 2009 inclusive      **WEBSITE:** <http://www.army.gov.au/history/museums.htm>  
**CONTACT:** Helen Bawden Ph: (07) 46917666      <http://www.161recceflt.org.au/MAAF/homepage.htm>

**EVENT:** Darling Downs Sport Aircraft Assoc. Inc. Clifton Fly-In  
**DATE:** 14 March, 2010 (arrivals late afternoon Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> are acceptable)  
**VENUE:** Bange's Airfield, Clifton, Queensland  
**CONTACT:** Trevor Bange Ph: (07) 4695 8541  
**Email:** [trevorbange@bigpond.com](mailto:trevorbange@bigpond.com)



## Memoirs! *Barefoot to Boeings* By Brian Crane (continued from issue 211)

Getting home on weekends was always a challenge and appealed to my continual sense of adventure. By leaving school a little early on Friday afternoon, I was able to walk down to the Nimbin Butter Factory where I would catch Hec Smith's cream lorry on its return trip to Lillian Rock and Blue Knob. I would walk from Lillian Rock to home, a distance of some 2 1/2 miles. I would ring home from Nimbin (at a cost of threepence (3c) for 3 minutes) a couple of times a week. To avoid missing school I negotiated with the local butcher to get a ride on their Saturday morning delivery, when bread and meat orders were delivered as far as Cawongla. They used to do this run twice a week. However, it meant leaving Nimbin at 2.30 a.m. and I then walked the 4 or 5 miles from the Wadeville/Kyogle turnoff on the Old Tweed Road. It has always fascinated me to be travelling as dawn is breaking, and this walk was no less of a delight. I would arrive at Wadeville as everyone was getting up, so still got my full weekend.

The final year at Nimbin, Bob Latter, an apprentice at Pearce's Garage, joined the army and wanted to sell his push bike. I had always envied this bike, racing rims and light-weight, but had spokes missing and the brake cable had to be pulled to brake it (one end was attached to the bar under the seat). While Bob was working, I would often borrow it to ride to the end of the bitumen both directions out of Nimbin. I eagerly negotiated for it, Pop financing me for the three pounds (\$6) and the new spokes, tyres and tubes and a rear rack for my little suitcase.

Being an adventurous little blighter, I then used to ride this bike the 11 miles on a gravel road between Wadeville and Nimbin. As it was down Monday and back Friday it was not too bad. The major obstacle on the route was Stoney Chute Hill, which was a winding 2 mile steep climb. With no gear assistance like today, it was always a walk pushing the bike, being of course rewarded by the long "coast" down the other side. I can vividly recall a stupid action one day on my way to Nimbin. Whilst negotiating the steep descending turn near the school at the start, as I needed my right hand to extract my handkerchief, transferred my left hand across to the brake, to immediately lose control, hit the gravel and over the side - no serious injuries, but a lot of skin off and a seriously dented pride.

Pop met me half way up Stoney Chute one afternoon in his 1934 Dodge Tourer. I was naturally pleased to see him for the lift, but in lifting the bike into the back seat, I put the brake lever through the canvas hood.

When boarding with the Stephens, next door neighbour was Ben Knowles, who used to operate the Nimbin/Lismore bus service. He used a 1930 De Soto car to ferry passengers to outlying areas. As a reward for me helping him clean the bus, he taught me to drive, and as they had no children he more or less took me under his wing. Delightful man, very kind, and nicknamed me "Oigle", after the comic strip character from Smith's Weekly.

Midst of the war during High School years, the continual loss of local men was always devastating. Seeing so many people in uniform on leave, and any bloke in R.A.A.F. uniform with wings on his chest was always a target for me. As my love of aeroplanes was increasing, I read everything about every aeroplane built. I Remember once at Wadeville, two Beauforts in low level formation came over me, staring up in awe and imagining myself in the pilot's seat. To feed my technical mind, I used to hang around the Pearce garage a lot, observing all their activities. To keep me out of their hair they gave me a regular job sweeping the garage floor a couple of days a week at 3 shillings (30c) a time, big money.

Due to the wartime shortage of teachers, our subjects of study for the Intermediate were limited. However, despite my lack of scholastic enthusiasm I always did well, coming second in my class in all exams except one, when I topped the class.

A sidelight of wartime petrol rationing was the introduction of a new industry. The manufacture and fitting of charcoal gas producers became common, and there appeared a number of charcoal burning pits round the district in places where suitable timber existed. The latter gave employment to many who were ineligible for war service, and although very hard work, it gave these people a sense of purpose (and money). Great pits were dug, gum logs laid in them and lit, the whole pit covered in sheets of galvanized iron and sealed with dirt. A smoldering fire was allowed to burn for several days, the iron removed and the charcoal bagged for sale. Jack Pearce's garage produced an excellent gas producer unit, which burnt charcoal in a hopper, and through a series of coolers/filters it was piped to the vehicle engine. The power produced was only a fraction of petrol, but was unrestricted. Their unit had a special upper cylinder lubricating unit fitted to the manifold to overcome drying of the cylinders by the gas.

Care was necessary when topping up the hopper, so it was wise to drop a match in the nearly empty hopper to ignite the gas when the lid was opened. Until this precaution was learnt, you used to see a few people getting around with singed eyebrows, eyelids and hair (was capable of a spectacular "WHOOSH"). Mounting position of the units varied (they were pretty heavy), and some were even trailer mounted. Spare bags of charcoal were always carried. Vehicles operating in town only were fitted with roof-mounted gas bags for use of town gas. These were fairly unwieldy, and also vulnerable to damage.

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## Memoirs! *Continued...* By Brian Crane *(continued from page 8)*

My interests were still technical, with aviation taking preference. Our final year at Nimbin we were fortunate in obtaining a Manual Training teacher, although only one day per week. He came out from Lismore on the "service car" every Friday at 8.30, leaving the same day after 4.30 p.m.

As I loved Technical Drawing in the morning and the Woodwork in the afternoon, I spent every available minute with this teacher, foregoing play and lunch periods. I still have a table that I made in 1944 at school from old cedar desks we cut up by hand. Those were rewarding days, and gave me a new lease on life, and I envy the children of today who have so much equipment at school for wood and metal work.

This year, I also smartened myself academically applying myself to my studies as never before, even to the stage of enjoying homework. Unfortunately, this was the FIRST year that the Education Department decided that A's, B's and C's would be done away with and supplemented by a simple "PASS" or "FAIL". I am pleased to advise (and so were my parents) that I "PASSED".

Even though I no doubt would have been given the opportunity to obtain my Leaving Certificate (now HSC) in Lismore, I had had enough of school and wanted to work on the farm. My brother, Jim, Pop and I ran the dairy farm for 2 years. As Pop supplied our clothing and food, he naturally couldn't see our need for independent money, and when going to town we had to ask for (modest) spending money. This is not meant as a criticism. That was how things were done as money was not that plentiful.

Like all children of our era, considerable entertainment was dependent on the old valve radio as previously described. Depending on our age, programs of interest varied over the years. Pop always listened to the ABC news, the weekly "Old Time Music Hall" and Wilfred Thomas's "Travel Talks". Mother listened to "The Lawsons" (later became "Blue Hills") and some of our selected serials.

"Yes, What", "Dad and Dave", "Martin's Corner", "First Light Fraser" (a wartime story of an Agent outwitting the Gestapo in occupied France) were all avidly followed. Stories like "The Woman in 'White'" and "The Phantom Drummer" were always certain to raise the hair on our heads and terrify us in the limited kerosene lighting of the day, and especially if we had to go out around rabbit traps, the outside toilet or to lock up chooks and ducks.

Humour came from Roy Rene (Mo), Hal Lashwood, Jack Davey, Keith Smith and Dick Bentley to name just a few. Reception was best at night, of course, but still most stations faded in and out and static was always a problem.

We loved to listen to our favourite Western artists, volume turned down, sitting in the dark with our ear up to the speaker (no ear phones). With a darkened, quiet house sound still carried, so it was a matter of tolerating the yells of "Get to bed and turn it off" as long as possible.

The 6 volt battery, when flat (no spares), had to be sent away in the cream truck for charging, this taking a week. During the war, the failure of the 3 huge dry batteries meant being without the radio for up to three months. Looking back, the radio was excellent, as you built your own picture in your mind on what you heard. During the war years, all farmers were installing milking machines to cope with diminishing labour resources. In our case, the older boys and Pop spent a lot of time modifying our old cattle bails for the purpose. Necessary to convert to double bails, a central exit door, where the machine unit (ours was a 3 "unit") could be used alternate sides to keep the milking flowing. By today's technology it was slow and crude, but worked well. Our machine was a MacDonald unit, powered by a MacDonald diesel engine, the smell of exhaust fascinating us kids when running.

Also installed was a brand new Lister Separator, and there was a countershaft carrying wooden pulleys to drive the vacuum pump (milking machine), separator and milk pump (to take separated milk to the pig's sty.) As all needed different speeds pulley had to be carefully "sized". These used to fascinate us in operation, and of course all bearings needed daily oiling by Pop. The consequences of failing to return the oil can to its proper place I remember very well.

The annual crops of corn (maize) were a source of play when we were children. (Later years as adults, a source of hard work). Using pocket knives, we would cut down the stalks splitting them like REAL trees, to make little "timber cutter" camps. We never cut down enough to be noticed as destructive, so were tolerated.

White cockatoos attacked the crop in the hundreds, impossible to scare by shooting due to the "lookout" bird, (hence the term "cockatoo" at gambling games) screeching the alarm as we approached. Only hope was to build a "hide" and wait till the birds arrived, but this was time consuming and only worked once.

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## Memoirs! *Continued...* By Brian Crane *(continued from page 9)*

Rosella parrots also loved corn and the early attackers opened the ears at the tassell, allowing water to enter the cob, causing fermentation. This, of course, resulted in the following birds getting "drunk as skunks" and easy to catch. We always let them go, of course, and they recovered quickly. However, just standing and watching their inebriated antics was a great laugh.

Saccholine grown for cattle fodder was also great for our "timber town" camps, but we used to get the stalks, bend them and suck the juice from the resultant "split". We often developed sore mouths where the sharp edges of the stalks cut into us. Cow cane was a source also of sweet pickings, but the itching caused by the serrated leaves restricted access to the crop.

Water supply to the dairy was from a creek water hole. As a small child I remember Pop surveying the project very carefully, working out the "lift" accurately. It was a large positive displacement piston pump, driven by the ex-dairy Waugh & Josephson kerosene engine. Pump and engine were mounted on a large log in a shed. Used to fill the carburetor with petrol to start, and this would get it hot enough to then run on the kerosene. Open crankshaft, oil drip lubrication of the piston, grease cups screwed down regularly lubricated the bearings. Inlet valve opened by suction (no tappet), and it was a wonderfully rugged and reliable old engine. Pop also piped water to an outside tap at the house for chook water and general cleaning use. We used to get a clip under the ear if we left this tap on and wasted the tank of dairy water.

Another old engine that fascinated us as kids, was an old "hit and miss". This so named as it was governed by the magneto operation being interrupted when overspeeding. Under no load it was BANG-BANG-BANG-CHUFF-CHUFF until speed dropped. When under load, it kept firing regularly. When I attend shows where engines such as these have been restored, I can sit and watch them by the hour with great nostalgia.

Our immediate neighbour, Len McBurney had his wife in hospital with a new baby. As Pop and Jim could manage at home, I used to ride over on old Dolly twice a day to help him. At the end of the week (didn't expect it), he handed me a Pound Note (\$2.00) which I greatly treasured being the first money I had earned (better than winning the lottery!).

Len was one of the first to employ an Italian P.O.W., which the Government made available for farmers. They used to wear old Australian Army uniforms dyed maroon. Some of them were "selective" in their understanding of English, but most were very good workers and gave no security problems. The one from Len's place came to the Wadeville dances. Many became migrants after the war and were first class citizens.

With our dairy, Pop always undertook to assemble the milking machines and separator prior to milking. He also boiled the water in a special shed, two 4 gal. kerosene tins hung over the fire, to wash the dairy gear, which he always did thoroughly, and scalded afterwards. When Pop had finished with the fire we would boil water to make "Meggitts Meal", a linseed product for our poddy calves, which was excellent, but had to be cooked properly.

Of course, no electricity at Wadeville, so kerosene lights were our normal lighting. A Tilley pressure lamp was used in the kitchen (for its bright light) and Pop used his Aladdin lamp for reading with its adequate but lovely soft light. Occasionally the Aladdin would "flare" blackening the mantle, which could be "burnt off" with correct flame control. Pop each afternoon filled all the lamps with kerosene, pumped out of a 4 gal. tin with the old standard tin kerosene drum pump. The sound of that pump still echoes in my ears.

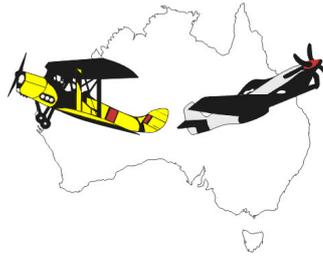
As a youth I naturally followed the war exploits of all our Services, but we now know 50 years later it often bore little relationship to the actual events and outcome at the time. Nevertheless, the publicity surrounding the R.A.F. and R.A.A.F. appealed to a young lad like me. Had the war continued, no doubt I would have attempted to enlist in the R.A.A.F., as I desperately wished to fly! As the war had made so many people air minded, the Aero Club movement began to get under way. Under sponsorship of the Newcastle Aero Club, Murwillumbah and Casino became active, and their progress was eagerly followed by me, through publicity in the local "Northern Star." During the war, I used to make balsa wood solid models of aircraft. These were carved carefully, accurately painted and suspended on black thread above my sleep-out located bed, where their realistic flying poses used to give me great joy. As I only had "Gem" razor blades, a pocket knife and plans to work from, the accuracy of the models was surprising.

Of course, I was very proud of them, and many people admired their accuracy. It would have been nice to hand these on to my children and their children, but sadly my young brother, Ray, used to sit on my bed with an air gun, and the 2 years I was in the R.A.A.F. he destroyed every one.

Pop (under urging by me) took us to an Air Pageant at Casino. Like a small boy in a lolly shop, seeing all these aeroplanes close up was absolutely fascinating. The yellow Tiger Moths, silver Hornets, the huge (to me then) twin engine Dragons and Ansons in their pristine "demob" imaginative colour schemes. One Dragon had "Aircrafts Pty Ltd" emblazoned on it.

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**Queensland Vintage  
Aeroplane Group  
Australian Flying Museum**



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**Dedicated to the Airworthy Preservation of Australia's Historic Aircraft**

## **Memoirs! Continued...** By Brian Crane *continued from page 10*

This Company became QAL (Queensland Airlines Ltd) which after its amalgamation with Ansett in 1969 involved me, as then Queensland Branch Chairman of the Australian Federation of Air Pilots, in a bitter seniority integration dispute. Boy, how the wheel turns! However, back to the Air Pageant. The sight and sound of all these aeroplanes together was awe-inspiring. Of course, the R.A.A.F. put on a display with a DeHavilland Mosquito. The roar of its twin Merlins at high speed and low level followed by single engine displays of feathering and unfeathering past the crowd was most spectacular.

As a sidelight, at another pageant at Casino (at which I was not present, unfortunately), the same display came unstuck when an intended "unfeather" became a "feathering" of the operating engine. Fortunately, the flat country only resulted in the aeroplane wearing out its wooden belly, leaving the pilots to be found unhurt sitting on their parachutes (obviously quite embarrassed, and probably thinking what they would be telling their C.O.).

At the Pageant I was attending, I asked Pop for money for a joy ride and this I took in a Hornet Moth. During the flight I talked incessantly to the pilot, mainly questions. When he stuffed up the landing, he wheeled on me telling me you should never talk to the pilot during landing. Naturally I was quite hurt, but think now he was very inexperienced as learnt later the necessity of continued "instructional patter" through all flight sequences when I became an instructor. This day, of course, really fired up my enthusiasm to learn to fly, and every day my thoughts were on how to go about it.

Some of the details elude me now, but Pop supplied me with money to enable me to pay for accommodation and take some trial flying lessons at the Casino Aero Club. This was in 1946 and the cost was Three Pounds Ten Shillings (\$7.00) per hour. People at the Hotel were middle aged, very pleasant (think they must have been friends of Ma and Pop). I stayed there 3 nights and spent every possible minute at the Aerodrome assisting with fuelling, handling the aircraft when not flying. Instructor was Roger Howley, a kind, helpful man, who ensured I got value in every second of my 2 1/2 hours "dual" (all I could afford). Apart from the joyride in the Hornet, this was my first experience of really flying and have never forgotten a minute of it, nor the enthusiasm and help of those around me.

**IN THE NEXT EDITION OF AVAN - Memoirs! Continued .....**

### **Next Issue**

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

- Report from Annual General Meeting
- Memoirs! By Brian Crane ..... *Other aircraft I recall were a Curtis C46 "Commando" and a Supermarine "Walrus" amphibian. There were aeroplanes everywhere - a joy for a boy my age.....*
- And more!

If you would like to submit an article, please give me a call on 0409 640 781.

## **Membership Matters**

A welcome is extended to the following new members, or those who were once members, and have rejoined since March 2009, as follows (full and associate members):

Don Carroll, Sandra Carroll, Marwyn Copelin, Peter Healey, Peter Holmes, Kevin Lawrance, Brett Manktelow, Carron Phillips, Mark Shipton, Craig Thomsen.

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.

**A reminder if you have not yet paid your membership fees then you may not be able to vote at the Annual General Meeting. Please pay your membership fees address as soon as possible.**

**"New members  
makes our  
Group stronger"**



**"Support your group by paying your membership"**