



THE QUEENSLAND VINTAGE AEROPLANE GROUP
& AUSTRALIAN FLYING MUSEUM INC

Australian Vintage Aeroplane News

Vol. 16/09



Gipsy Moth restored and belonging to Nick Challinor.

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News from the Editor

In this issue I have continued with the research articles on RAAF airfields in SE Queensland Northern NSW. I hope that I have coupled this with news about contemporary QVAG events.

The feedback from readers is most welcome and usually comes with leads that enable news and photos to be gathered. Please keep it up, I enjoy reading your emails.

I realise that not all parts of this journal are of equal interest to members, however I hope enough of you enjoy reading them to the extent that it justifies the time that I put in digging round to round up the content

Regards

Ross Stenhouse QVAG-AFM President and Editor

Email: Rossjanstenhouse@hotmail.com

Membership Matters

Presidents Report Presented to the 2015 AGM

First and most important I need to thank the outgoing committee for all their work and enthusiasm.

Phil Ridley is a pillar of the group and did an excellent job as Treasurer,

Liz Finley our secretary lives at Goondiwindi and made the big drive (four hours each way) to attend committee meetings. The past two meetings we held a telephone conference in place of face to face and they were a success.

Jan Stenhouse has been doing so much work in keeping with the membership, there is a lot more work in the membership officer's position that you would at first think.

Steve Newing our VP, Steve has been a fountain of new ideas, one of which has been to offer reciprocal affiliate membership a number of the local aviation historical groups. This offer was taken up by the Caboolture Warplane Museum and the Queensland Air Museum.

Peter Biddle has been out delegate on the WBMA Airfield Council. I would like to thank Peter for his efforts.

I believe this year has been very successful for the group. Our membership numbers have had a slight increase and we retained almost all of the existing members from the previous year. This year AGM is only nine months since we our previous AGM. Last year's AGM was delayed because I had to have a major operation for bowel cancer and our Treasurer Phil Ridley had a heart operation. Bout occurred about October last year normally the time when we hold our AGM.

I thought I would do a recount of the significant events that we have been involved with this year.

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From the 11th to the 15th May, QVAG-AFM hosted ""Red Thunder"" in our building. This is a great flying event involving primarily Nanchang and Yak aeroplanes.

This year we introduced the concept of ""Grass Roots Fly-ins"" These are meant to be small fly-ins at various airfields at which one or more of operate their aeroplanes. The first of the fly-ins was held on February 28th at Kilcoy and a second in July at Gatton Airpark and the third at Kingaroy on 17th September. We have a fourth grass roots fly-in to be held on Sunday 20th November at Murwillumbah.

The geographical spread of the fly-ins reflects the fact that we are an organisation with a wide geographical reach. We are not just a Watts Bridge or Caboolture centric group.

At the last AGM it was highlighted that we needed to have AVAN published regularly. That has been achieved with eight editions published and distributed via email and a ninth edition almost ready to go out this year and the first edition for next year in the early stages of being written. We have received positive feedback on the editions we have published.

The Brisbane Valley Air Show was a mixed success for WBMA, however for QVAG it was a huge success and the group made about \$4,000 which was a very welcome addition to our treasurer. I would like to give my most warm thanks to Doug, Lorraine, Trina, Jan and Liz for working so hard for QVAG over those two days.

Last night was the first of the last Saturday in the month BBQ's. These are the Treasurer's Phil Ridley idea and they are an attempt to increase the interaction between members based at Watts Bridge. I think this will be one of the small but highly successful activities that QVAG undertakes.

Lastly I would like to thank all the members; we are only a small group however our future looks bright. I wrote requesting proxy's from members. This has been my practice for the period I have been President because I realise that Watts Bridge can be a bit remote and people AGM's usually aren't well attended (I think people are scared they might get nominated and elected to a position).

I believe that the overwhelming return of proxies shows the high level of satisfaction with the services the group is providing. This is a very positive response and I thank those members who have confidence in me and appointed me as their proxy.

Finally thanks to the members who were able to attend the meeting; your support to QVAG-AFM is appreciated.

What Tire for a Tiger Moth

Author: Ross Stenhouse

Could you get to like the tire in the photo below? I know that we like balloon tires and I share that however prior to fitting balloon tyres to my Tiger about 15 years ago I had treaded tires and thought nothing bad about it.



The tire at left is available from Desser in the USA and costs US\$395. They used to stock a balloon tire part number DD14020.

DD14020 is the same product code as the Moth Club in the UK has at 375 UK pounds each and the corresponding tubes at 75 UK pounds each.

The International Auster Club web site has Desser as a supplier of tires for Austers.

See the following Desser URL for details:

<https://www.desser.com/Aircraft-Tires-and-Tubes/700-7-5-6-PLY.asp>

--oOo--

Feedback on Bellman Hangar Article

Hi Ross,

I got sent a copy of your magazine and we hope to get o Murwillumbah for the 19th. I'm part of The Great Eastern Fly-In and was very interested to read your article about the Bellman Hangars, as ours has been restored and it is now the Aviation Museum, looking good. I travel all over Australia for work by small aircraft and see these wonderful hangars everywhere; I work as a tour guide and always tell my clients the history of these buildings.

I'd also like to invite all your members to this year's Great Eastern which is on the 7 -8 January. We do have a number of vintage aircraft which attend but would always love anyone to join us.

The magazine is really good and I enjoyed it a lot.

Cheers

Gai Taylor ☺

More Proctor News

Following this journals last edition (Vol. 16/08) we have had some feedback and can give a catch-up on the restoration VH-UXS (DUL) from Brian Turner of Latrobe Valley Airframes and Welding PL.



My son Damien and I have been working on VH-UXS (DUL) for about 3 years now. I don't need to tell you what a massive job it is! We have now completed all the woodwork except for the fuselage belly skin and some CS ply. Not a single glue joint was considered airworthy and has had to be re glued. What did surprise us was the condition of the spruce; we have been able to salvage around 85% of the original structure. The main spars, once the ply webs were removed were in remarkable condition. Of course as you would know, none of the ply has been usable.

The starboard wing is now in the fabric shop with the port soon to follow. Next year we hope to be fitting out all the systems etc. We had Linton at Moorabbin make up all the new cables and everything fitted and operated perfectly when we did a trial rigging..

Paul will be here in the next few days and no doubt will help out as usual. He loves getting his hands dirty on the project and is a great help doing all those little fiddly jobs which allows us to get on with the structure.

I have seen photos of your project and it is looking great!

If there is anything we can help you out with just let us know as we have collected a lot of knowledge and info on Proctors over the course of the restoration.

Hopefully in the next 2 years she will take to the air again

Well that is great feedback and the offer to Ross of help with his Proctor restoration is great and is an example of the comradeship that exists amongst old aeroplane restorers.



Westland Widgeon III VH-UHU under Rebuild





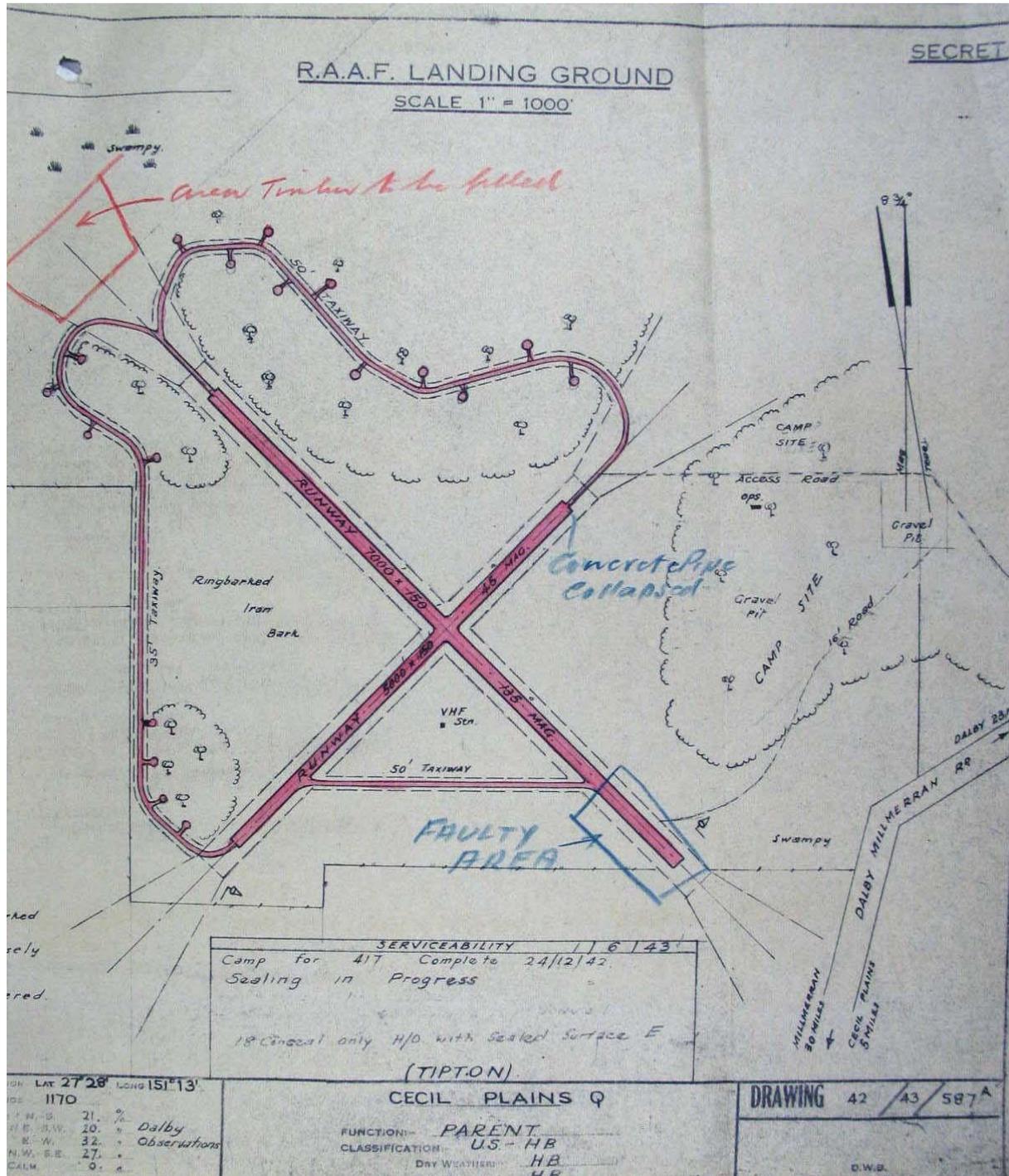
Not only is Brian Turner from Latrobe Valley Airframes and Welding PL rebuilding Paul Gliddon's Percival Proctor they are restoring Westland Widgeon III VH-UHU as well. In 1928 the Widgeon was imported from the UK as G-AUHU¹. The Widgeon is being restored for James Courtney, Melbourne

¹ <http://www.edcoatescollection.com/ac1/austu/vhuhu.html>

RAAF at Cecil Plains

Author: Ross Stenhouse

Another wartime airfield located in S.E. Queensland. I enjoyed researching it and I hope you enjoy reading the results of my work.





Cecil Plains Today

The airfield is located about 7km north of the town of Cecil Plains, to the west of the Dalby-Cecil Plains Road. Cook Road and Miss Jurgs Road skirt the airfield to its northeast and northwest sides.

The two intersecting sealed runways (45 degree and 135 degree) are still obvious from the air, as are the sealed taxiway that connected the south ends of the two runways, and the two sealed taxiways that curved from the ends of the 45 degree runway northwards to the NW end of the 135 degree runway.

This aeroplane is certainly worth a check both from the air and from the ground.

Latitude 27.27.46 S Longitude 151.12.34

History of RAAF Cecil Plains

The arrival of US forces in Queensland from late December 1941 led to an increased demand for airfields to accommodate US aircraft. Existing RAAF airfields were used, and new fields were also constructed. Cecil Plains was one of four airfields built for US heavy bombers (Cecil Plains, Leyburn, Jondaryan and Condamine). These inland airfields could be used to launch bombing missions if the Japanese ever landed near Brisbane.

In late March 1942 the RAAF requested that the Department of the Interior construct an airfield at Cecil Plains, just west of the Condamine River. However, the Queensland Main Roads Commission (MRC) was still awaiting instructions regarding Cecil Plains and the other three bomber airfields in early April. By 4 May 1942 one strip had been levelled and

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cleared at each airfield at Jondaryan, Condamine and Leyburn, with work in progress at Cecil Plains. By 15 May a northwest-southeast (135 degree) strip had been cleared and was available for use at Cecil Plains, while formation gravelling of the northeast-southwest (45 degree) strip was in progress.

The basic approach was to clear one strip; clear and then gravel the runway of the second strip; and then gravel the runway of the first strip. This way, one strip would always be available for dry-weather operation of aircraft during construction. Taxiways would also be gravelled, and both taxiways and runways would later be sealed when tar and bitumen was available. The 135 degree runway at Cecil Plains was 7000' long by 150' wide (2.14km by 45.7m), while the 45 degree runway was 5000' long by 150' wide (1.52km by 45.7m). Main taxiways were gravelled to 50' (15.2m) wide, while the taxiways to hideouts, provided at 16 dispersal points, would be 35' (10.6m) wide.

By 1 July 1942 most of the 135 degree runway had been gravelled (it was useable by 18 July), and taxiways had been cleared. Hideout locations had been selected, with 6 on the western taxiway loop, and 10 on the eastern loop. The hideouts at Cecil Plains were of the slung type, with steel cables supporting camouflage netting. During late 1942 voluntary labour in Dalby was pre-garnishing the netting with steel wool, and this material was also used for dummy trees. After being requested in December 1942 two more hideouts were added to the western loop, but none of the hideouts appear to have been used.

The camp site for the airfield was located east of the runways, near some gravel pits, and construction of an access road to the site from the Dalby Road was still required in July 1942. By early October 1942 work had started on a mess building and by late December the camp was mostly complete (if not painted) and a weir was being constructed across the Condamine River.

In August 1942 preparations were made to seal the two runways, but a plan of the airfield dated 1 June 1943 notes "sealing in progress". This map showed the location of the 18 hideouts branching off from the taxiways which linked the southwest and northeast ends of the 45 degree runway with the northwest end of the 135 degree runway. A 180 degree taxiway also ran between the southern ends of the two runways.

At this time Cecil Plains was classified as a US Heavy Bomber all weather airfield. However, as the Japanese never invaded Queensland, the airfield was never used by the US and it was unoccupied until late 1944. In July 1943 it was listed as one of 17 unoccupied airfields in Queensland, with buildings and services for 450 men. By 5 December 1944 some hideouts had collapsed in parts, and two 12,000 gallon underground petrol tanks had been installed.²

RAAF No. 12 Squadron

12 Squadron was formed at Laverton on 6 February 1939. The Squadron was equipped with Avro Ansons and Hawker Demons. In July 1944, No. 12 Squadron moved to Strathpine, Queensland, where it was reduced to cadre status ahead of being converted to a heavy bomber unit.^[7] The squadron moved to Cecil Plains from 19 December and began to be re-equipped with Consolidated B-24 Liberator heavy bombers.

² <http://www.ww2places.qld.gov.au/places/?id=476>

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The squadron had previously flown Vultee Vengeance dive bombers, but it began to receive B-24 Liberator heavy bombers on 5 February 1945 while at Cecil Plains.

In March 1945 the wheel of a parked B-24 broke through a pipe culvert at the northeast end of the 45 degree runway (used mainly for parking aircraft), and the southeast end of the 135 degree runway also needed repairs by this time.

It was stated that the airfield was not built to B-24 standard, but that it could be used provided that aircraft were grounded for a couple of days after 2 inches of rain. The hideouts were overgrown by this time, and the taxiways, although little used, were in good order.

No. 12 Squadron began to move to Darwin in late March 1945 and became operational there in early May.

It was whilst in Darwin that member Michael Redmond's father joined the squadron. On return to Australia from Europe in 1945, his father was sent to Tocumwal to convert onto Liberators and then sent to 12 Squadron in Darwin carrying, as we discussed, personnel from Darwin to Gawler, Essendon and Amberley.

In June 1947, No. 12 Squadron's aircrew moved to RAAF Base East Sale to begin conversion training for Avro Lincoln heavy bombers. The squadron continued operating these aircraft until 22 February 1948 when it was redesignated No 1 Squadron.



RAAF No. 102 Squadron

Soon after 12 Squadron had departed, RAAF 102 Squadron was formed at Cecil Plains at the end of May 1945 and their B-24s arrived in July.

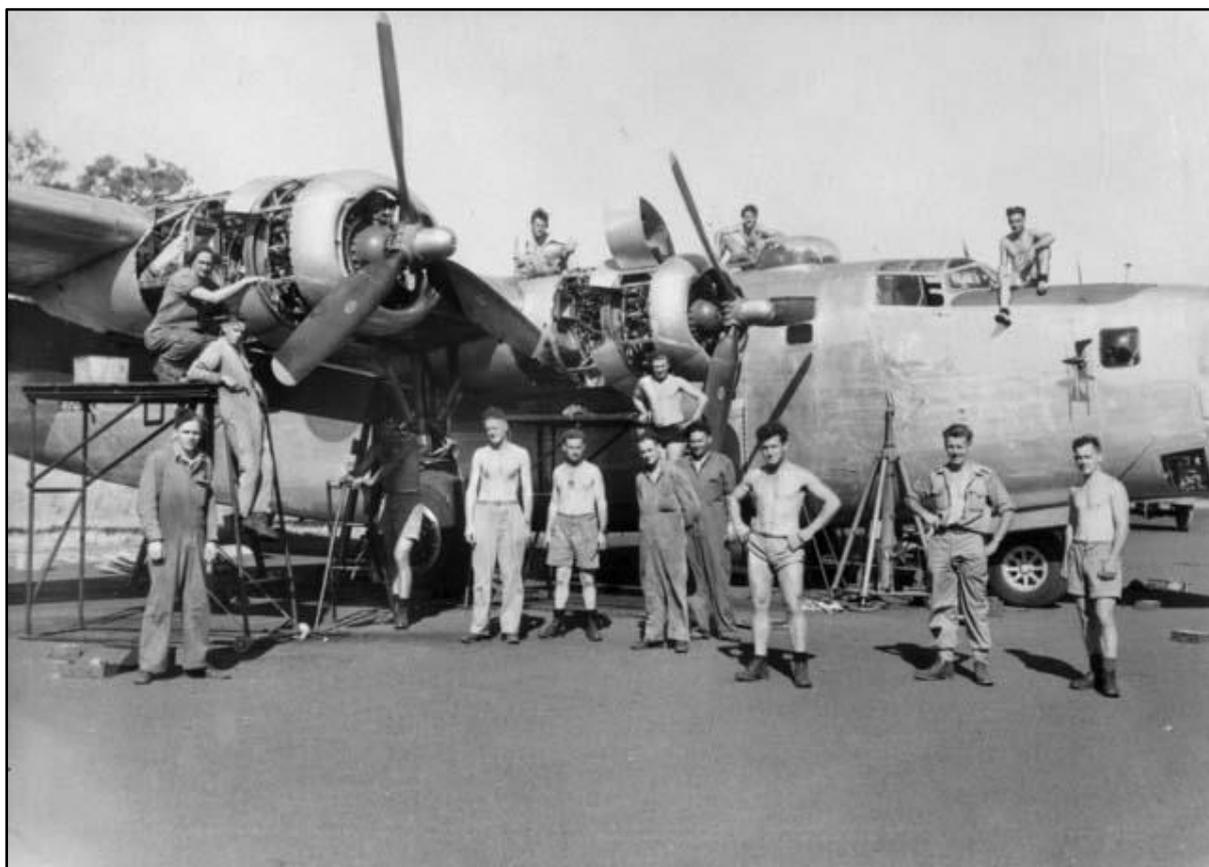
102 Squadron was one of seven RAAF Squadrons equipped with B24 Liberator heavy bombers. The squadron's first CO was SQNLDR John Dennett. The squadrons first of 220 airman arrived at Cecil Plains on 22nd June 1945 and the balance of the squadrons personnel of 600 arrived 4th July

1945. The squadron's first B24 was delivered on 4th July 1945 with the further B24s and a single Avro Anson being delivered on the 8th of that month.

The Anson was later replaced by a Tiger Moth A17-734.³ At this stage of its life A17-734 was in the standard RAAF training yellow colour scheme.



³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No._102_Squadron_RAAF



The squadron never saw active duty, although 9 of its aircraft flew over Brisbane on 16 August 1945 to celebrate the end of the war. 102 Squadron was therefore still at Cecil Plains in October 1945, when it was reported that the 45 degree runway was in excellent order, and the repaired 135 degree runway was in good order.

The end of the war in the Pacific theatre resulted in the squadron being employed largely in the transport and ferry role. No 102 Squadron aircraft flew to Finschhafen, Morotai and Bougainville, bringing supplies to Australian forces still stationed throughout the South-West Pacific, and repatriating time-expired troops.⁴

No 102 Squadron ceased flying operations in December 1945, and the unit was disbanded at Cecil Plains on 18 March 1946.

Tiger Moth A17-734

A17-734 was received by the RAAF on 12th October 1944 at Richmond and on the 16th of the same month was received by 10 EFTS at Temora NSW. On the 23rd July 1945 A17-734 was received by 102 Squadron at Cecil Plains.

¹ <https://www.airforce.gov.au/raafmuseum/research/units/102sqn.htm>

⁴ <http://www.ww2places.qld.gov.au/places/?id=476>

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On the 14th July 1946 A17-734 was back with 10 EFTS at Temora and on 01st April 1946 was stored by the Care and Maintenance Unit at Temora. On 28th May 1947 it was received by 2AD at Richmond NSW and on 31st May 1948 it was issued to 21 Squadron Citizen Air Force at Laverton Vic.



On 29th May 1952 A17-734 was received by 1 BFTS (Basic Flying Training School) at Uranquinty NSW. On 13th July 1954 A17-734 was damaged in an accident and subsequently assessed as BUR (Beyond Unit Repair) and sent to 2AD at Richmond and subsequently to 1AD at Tocumwal NSQ where in 1957 it was approved for disposal.

On 7th March 1958 A17-734 received its first civil registration as VH-DAC. On 29th June 1958 the registration was changed to SAC by its owner Deniliquin Aerial Services.



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The photo on the bottom of the previous page is of VH-SAC and one can see that by this stage of its life it is set up for aerial spraying and crop dusting. You can see the turn-over truss behind the pilot and the spray bars on the wings. The front cockpit is faired over and contains a crop dusting hopper.

In June 1965 VH-SAC suffered substantial damage in an accident when it clipped power lines. It was placed into long-term storage. In April 1991 the rebuild of VH-SAC was completed by Dave McKenzie of Cootamundra and in 1991 it was purchased by Randy and Sandra Walsh as their first Tiger Moth for their joy flight operation.

In 2004 the aeroplane suffered a taxiing accident at Torquay Vic and again stored for rebuild.



On 13th August 2014 VH-SAC (A17-734) was purchased by Kevin Carder and in the photo above is loaded on a trailer for the trip back to Sydney.

A more complete history of A17-734 together with an ongoing blog of its rebuild can be read at:

<https://kevstigermoth.wordpress.com/the-history-of-a17-734/>

Australian Comforts Fund, WWII

During my research for the article on RAAF at Cecil Plains I came across the photo below and it had me interested and puzzled.

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A significant majority of Australia volunteers during World War II worked for one of the two largest wartime organisations: the Australian Red Cross and the Australian Comforts Fund. Both these organisations were officially recognised by the Australian Government to support and assist Australia's servicemen and women. The ACF was run largely by women volunteers who undertook the majority of administrative and manual work.⁵



The photo above is of a truck that carried a mobile cinema and it was provided free of charge to the Australian Servicemen and women. It took me quite a while to figure that the IAN COMFORTS FUND on the side of the truck was really AUSTRALIAN COMFORTS FUND and the first part of the wording was written on the open door.

The photo was taken at Cecil Plains and you can see a temporary screen in the background. Remember that there were 600 RAAF personnel of 102 Squadron at Cecil Plains and they needed some entrainment.

The aim of the ACF was to provide free 'comfort' items that were not supplied by the services to all Australian servicemen. These items included singlets, socks, pyjamas, cigarettes and tobacco, razor blades, soap, toothbrush, toothpaste and reading material (newspapers and magazines).

Additionally, the ACF also provided recreational facilities, rest rooms, sporting equipment, gramophones and records to the troops, as well as regularly providing writing materials such as pencils, paper and postcards so the soldiers' could write home. gramophones and records to the

⁵ <http://collections.museumvictoria.com.au/articles/10608>

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troops, as well as regularly providing writing materials such as pencils, paper and postcards so the soldiers' could write home.

I am amazed that such a large organisation such as the ACF has disappeared from the landscape of the common person while organisations such as the Red Cross remain.

Cecil Plains - Post WWII

The airfield was acquired but not maintained by the RAAF after the war, and is now unused.

Murwillumbah Fly-in 20th November 2016

Murwillumbah in many ways is the spiritual home of QVAG. In the early days of our group the Murwillumbah Fly-in was the event of the year and one not to be missed.

The last QVAG fly-in at Murwillumbah was way back in 1988. This grass roots fly-in was just a shadow of the size of the earlier events in terms of the number of aeroplanes present, how the spirit of comradely that was present in 1988 was still there in spades in 2016.

QVAG Grass Roots Fly-ins are by definition small fly-ins where the focus is not just on aeroplanes. It is equally as important that those attending sit down and talk to each other in an atmosphere of friendship.

This was a GREAT fly-in and I am absolutely positive that all those there enjoyed themselves immensely. The Challinors' Irene, Nick and Greg together with Ken Holsworth hosted this event. It was held in the Mothcarr hangar. We thank those four folks for their efforts. It's easy to forget apart from the tables, chairs and food, a fly-in normally means a tidy up of the hangar and that involves a lot of work.



Photo above: Gipsy Moths VH-UGN and VH-UMR

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Where else in Australia would you find two such iconic aeroplanes as the Gipsy Moths on display in such a beautiful location as Murwillumbah airfield?



A couple of photos of the people who were at the fly-in. There were a few more than shown in the photos but the circle of friends above was taken late on Sunday afternoon and only the "stayers" were left and in no hurry to leave.



Photos above and below: Beech E35 Bonanza VH-VBO owned by QVAG member Gary Pohlner



As an aside, member Gary Pohlner sent us the following on his Bonanza

I first saw this aircraft while visiting Wilson airport Nairobi Kenya. On subsequent visits it seemed to be moving location but not flying. Curiosity got the better of me and I was told the aircraft was not being flown by the owner due health. The aircraft was taxied regularly. After checking the logbooks I made an offer which was accepted.

An engineer and I went through the aircraft and could not find any corrosion. Eventually shipped to Brisbane, restoration commenced 2013 at Ian Aviation. The decision was made

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to overhaul engine and accessories at Poplar Grove Airmotive, USA, fit updated Hartzell Propeller, recondition the instruments and radio, gear and flap systems, replace three windows and fit new seat belts. New control cables and wing bolts. A transponder S was added. Strip and paint white.

Bruce Ramsay handled the CofA paperwork for "First of Type" (yes! CASA deemed this aircraft a First of Type). The C of A was issued October 2015. VBO has 4,000 hours total time and has flown in Africa and Europe and the Mediterranean region. It now lives at Lismore.

Particulars: Engine Continental E 225-8 225 hp; TAS 130 kts at 22inches, 2300RPM on 43 LPH.

Thanks to: Ian Aviation, Ian, Bob Woodley, Bob Singh and the boy, Bruce Ramsay Auscan Aviation and numerous helpful others.

What a great looking aeroplane the Bonanza is and yes folks it is 62 years old, it was built in 1954



Photo above: Greg Challinor's Tiger Moth VH-WTM

VH-WTM is a veteran of many QVAG fly-ins and it was great to see it again gracing one of our fly-ins.

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Photo above: Percival Gull Six owned by Ken Holdsworth

It seems very appropriate to have the catch-up on Percival Proctors under rebuild and have the Gull Six above in the same issue. This is a truly great aeroplane and the restoration was carried out at Murwillumbah by the Challinor Bros. at Mothcair. A big English wooden monoplane what more could you hope to see? Gosh I have to say I love the sound of the Gipsy Six engine!

Well you could hope to see some Austers! Yet again no Austers at fly-ins. Back in the 1970's fly-ins used to have plenty of Austers in attendance and very few if any Tiger Moths but the worm has turned and at this small fly-in there were three "Moths".





Photos above and below: Fairchild Argus VH-CMD

The Fairchild Argus belonging to Steve and Beate Newing is a great looking aeroplane and first appeared at the Gatton Airpark Grass Roots fly-in. Some folk may remember that for many years had a military colour scheme and was based in Victoria Steve Newing is the QVAG VP.





Photo above: Yak 52 VH-UHO belonging to Jeff Hutchinson

Jeff has the Yak based at Ballina, he heard there was a fly-in happening at Murwillumbah and decided to attend. It's great to see aeroplanes such as the YAK at our fly-ins. The YAK 52 was a Soviet primary trainer which first flew in 1976 and is still in production in Romani as Lak 52. It was designed to be an aerobatic trainer to train civilian sports pilots and military pilots.

Disclaimer

All views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of the author, the editor or the Queensland Vintage Aeroplane Group Australian Flying Museum Inc. They are simply opinions and are not necessarily fact.