

# All sun and fun at All-In Fly-In

STORY AND PICTURES  
BY ALAN BETTERIDGE

**W**ATTS Bridge airfield, near Toogoolawah in South East Queensland, has a motto which reads: 'If it flies –its welcome at Watts Bridge' and in May it lived up to that motto.

Near perfect weather conditions set the scene for the All-In Fly-In and more than 150 aircraft made the pilgrimage. That's as many as attended recent NATFLYs.

It wasn't only the number of aircraft attending but the wide variety of types represented which made the fly-in what it was.

Everything from a scale replica of a Panther jet, to T28s to Drifters, all shared the circuit area and it was a credit to all pilots concerned the event ran smoothly. Not one problem was encountered during the day.

Airfield identity and long-time LAME Bruce Clarke, who has been instrumental in the construction of a number of aircraft including his own Acro Sport and Sopwith Pup, is currently in the process of building a Nieuport 27.

Originally designed by Gustave Delage in 1917, the type was the last of the 'V Strut' Nieuport fighter aircraft.

It is hoped the aircraft will be flying before the year's end and will be one of the feature aircraft in the upcoming Gathering of Eagles fly-in to be held over the weekend of August 29/30.

Another historical World War 1 fighter aircraft being built under Bruce's watchful eye is the Focker Tri-plane of Kevin and Lyn Walters.

"This aircraft will be a full sized replica of the aircraft flown by Lothar Von Richthofen, Manfred's brother", says Kevin. "We hope to have it flying by the end of the year."

Lothar learned to fly in 1916 and was posted to his brother's Jasta 11 squadron in March 1917. Despite his late entry into the air war, he was considered one of the most combat efficient and prolific flying aces of the war, perhaps even more so than his brother, the



The parking area was full



*A long line of Tiger Moths would have been common at Watts Bridge during the war years*



*Can they get any smaller?  
Bob Hynam's Teenie 2*



*A replica Grumman Panther jet about to touch down.  
This aircraft is based at Watts Bridge*



*A lovely little Corella for sale at just \$12,500. A snip for an aircraft that was: "Just flown by a little old lady on Sundays" or so the sign said*



*Looking like the love child of a Beech Bonanza V35 was this Sonex which was first registered in 2013*



famous Red Baron.

Of his total of 40 confirmed victories, Lothar scored 33 in just three months: 15 in April 1917, eight in May 1917, and 10 in August 1918.

One of the more unusual aircraft at the fly-in had to be the Teenie 2 of Bob Hyam. Bob built this minuscule aircraft in 2011 and is happy with his choice of building projects.

"I would love to put a CAMit engine in it (see article *Sport Pilot* March 2015) because it would enhance its performance," said Bob.

"It is a bit lighter than the current VW engine, so I would need to move it forward a bit to maintain the correct balance but I think it would be a great project.

"Unfortunately, the cost is a bit much for me at the moment but you never know what the future holds," he said with a wry grin.

One of the great advantages of our category of aircraft is you don't need a lot of money to become involved.

This was obvious with a For Sale sign on a very well presented Corella. The going price of just \$12,500 seems reasonable for an aircraft only ever flown "by a little old lady on Sundays", or so the sign claimed.

Watts Bridge has a long association with aviation and can trace its roots back to 1942 when it was established as a military airfield.

When the war ended all the buildings were removed and the land allowed to return to grazing land.

In the early 1980s a group of aviation enthusiasts re-discovered it and set about restoring what was a historical piece of Australian aviation history.

By 1990 it was again up and running. It has continued to grow every year since and now is home to many significant types of aircraft.

Watts Bridge has gained a well-deserved and enviable reputation of being a great place to see and participate in all things aeronautical and the upcoming Gathering of Eagles fly-in looks set to continue this trend.

The event will celebrate 100 years since Gallipoli and will feature aircraft from both World Wars, along with what will undoubtedly be a huge range of all other things aviation.

Admission for all pilots and aircrew flying into the 'Gathering of Eagles' will be free with no landing fees.

The main day will be Saturday August 29 and onfield camping is encouraged.

To book a camping spot contact Liz Cook on 0419 369 963 or for more information [wattsbridge.com.au](http://wattsbridge.com.au) or email [info@wattsbridge.com.au](mailto:info@wattsbridge.com.au).

If the All-In Fly-In was anything to go by, the Gathering of Eagles will be a must-attend event. ✖

"You don't  
need a lot of  
money"



There were aircraft of all types to be seen at this year's fly-in





Stunning RV9A sporting an RA-Aus registration



Bob Hyam with the Teenie 2 he built four years ago



An Acro Sport, another of Bruce Clarke's creations



This S14 Airaile Valkyrie II looks like it can't wait to get airborne



Kevin and Lyn Walters hope to have their Focker Tri-plane flying by the end of the year