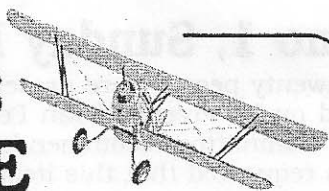


WATTS BRIDGE

MEMORIAL AIRFIELD INC.



Watts News

A newsletter issued by the Watts Bridge Memorial Flying
Field Air Chalet and Commercial Owners Group

March 2003

Greetings

I'm sure most would agree that the February meeting at Ed de Laat's was a constructive and congenial occasion. While it was decided that the next meeting, to be held on **Sunday April 6 at 1 pm**, will be at the same venue, you are hereby notified that Ed and Graziella's hospitality last time is no guarantee that all future meetings will be as sumptuous. We are all familiar with the traditional austerity of a hangar as a venue.

There have been some requests for a list of e-mail addresses to facilitate communication. Should you wish your address to be published in Watts News would you pass it on in writing to Mike N. at the next meeting please? The list will appear in the next issue.

Mike Nelson ph 33599018, email [mikejanelson @ powerup.com.au](mailto:mikejanelson@powerup.com.au)

Personality Profile: Bill Finlen

By far and away, the biggest and most rewarding flying experience is my Solo around the World flight in April 2002. I look at the little booklet my daughter made and wonder if I really did do that.

For as long as I can remember I have been interested in flying things.

I trained with the Department of Civil Aviation as a radio technician in Sydney and in the mid 60's, took up gliding at Camden. Every moment of spare time was somehow related to gliding where I competed in state and National competitions. I still remember some fantastic flights and in particular completing my diamond goal in a home built BG12 from Forbes. That flight was about 7 hours and BG12's were not built for comfort. Maybe that is where I got my first taste of celebrity status. Everyone waiting on the airfield at dusk helping me home, was a fantastic feeling.

I spoke at Dad's funeral of a wonderful experience

when we competed against each other in Ka6's at Narromine.

I did a deal with a well known pilot on the Gold Coast. I built his house and he taught me to fly powered planes. My interest soon developed to an instrument rating and Bonanza's.

Jennifer was on an "overnight" in her job with Ansett and I took advantage of that fact. She came home to find we were the proud owners of TYE.

It was in 2000 flying with a German friend across Iceland and Greenland in his "V" tail Bonanza that I committed to flying around the world. I set the date to leave Archerfield on my 60th Birthday.

And that experience was something I cannot replace. Many times I

looked down at the Ocean with 7 hours behind and another 7 hours to run and wondered "why the hell I wanted to do this". But I did it and will forever be reminded how lucky I have been with my flying



Bill's welcome home at Archerfield

All power to Richard Faint!!

Richard has been developing a website for our airfield. While it is not yet complete it can presently be visited at, <http://www.wattsbridge.com.au/index2.html> There is a particularly attractive logo using a clipart biplane (used at the top of this newsletter). Congratulations to Richard and any assisting him in this project of great potential.

Meeting at Ed's and Graziella's no 1, Sunday February 2.

A number of items were raised at this meeting. Close to twenty people were present. Firstly the group was interested to know whether the DCP had been forwarded on by President Ian Perkins (yes it has been). Secondly the meeting reaffirmed support for the Abnett Committee recommendation for a Management Committee that is independent of the airfield groups. It is requested that this item be placed on the agenda for WBMC's next meeting. The matter of reviewing the Airchalet representative was raised and it was agreed to have the position opened for nomination on April 6. Please give this matter consideration as widespread involvement in management is desirable. Concerns were raised regarding the constraints of the present constitution as identified in the Abnett report. A exploratory working party of four (Derek, Cheryl, Ed and Mike) agreed to examine similar airfield constitutions to see whether a new version could be developed in time for submission to the AGM. Gus was unable to attend but did give a written report to the meeting. He mentioned that Barry Hempel had already met with the Premier. The meeting was very positive and a more extensive meeting will follow. Gus has also been a semi-finalist in the Regional Achievers Award 2002 and won another Achievement Award as Nominee Citizen 2003. Both of these associated with his efforts at Watts Bridge.

WBMC meeting, Paradise Homes, Tuesday February 19

This summary is given in point form:

1. Bill Finlen is organising a dedicated mobile phone for the Airfield
2. Ross Stenhouse has resigned
3. Richard Faint discussed the website and the committee gave approval to keep going
4. Approval was given for the Airchalet group to proceed with developing a new constitution. The draft will be required by the management committee by May.
5. Liz Cook to proceed with a streamlined ops manual
6. Bill Finlen gained approval for funding to repair the electronics on the sewer system and install power surge protection.
7. A half page ad will appear in the 'Valley and Lakes' tourism brochure with Ramblers using the other half i.e. full page on recreational flying.
8. The huge amount of work done by Bill Finlen in cleaning up all the loose ends was recognised together with the airfield work by Rod Mill.
9. Approval was given to allow Bill the freedom to continue cleaning up outstanding invoices, leasing and membership issues.
10. The liability issues associated with the non-fencing of Silverleaves Road will be placed on next meeting's agenda.

A welcome to new members, Dennis and Cheryl Brown

Watts Bridge Airchalet owners warmly welcome Dennis and Cheryl Brown. They were in attendance at the February meeting and made a significant contribution to its success. We hope their future with Watts is as buoyant as the beginning.

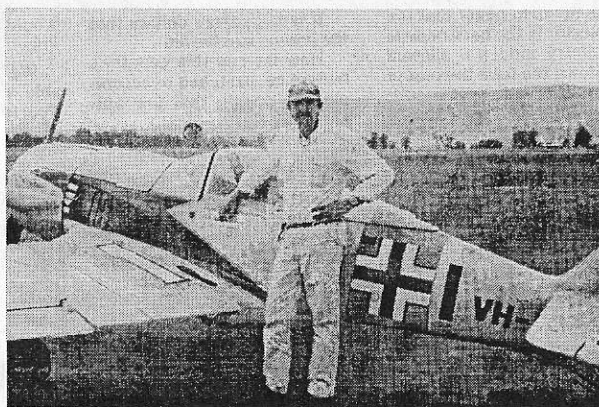
Memory Lane *continued . . .*

It was understandable that the airfield groups saw the airfield as a low cost facility for each group. This meant that airfield management was left to a few hardworkers. After all, people wanted to simply come out and fly and not get involved in any kind of management duties. So there has been the practice, which continues to this day, of most people only serving on the management committee for the minimum time then with relief passing the position on to the next unfortunate who accepts nomination because no one else will. Meanwhile the hardworkers were finding their responsibilities exhausting and were sometimes frustrated when their endeavours were seen clash with the priorities

of particular individuals or groups. Effective management was, (and still is) difficult.

In the nineties a dichotomy developed between WBMA's lease requirement of contracting to proceed with a Management Development Plan and the pressure from airfield groups to fly at minimum cost. Due to the strenuous efforts of the few the plan was developed. The Esk shire Council who leased the Airfield from the Water Board (as it was known) granted the sub-lease to WBMA. The hidden problem was that, due to pressures to keep costs down, there was little prospect of raising the finance necessary to proceed with the Management Development Plan.

(to be continued . . .)



Barry Hempel and Focke-Wulf replica 1995