



The N.S.W. Sport Aircraft Club Newsletter

APRIL - MAY 2009

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Above: The Super "Connie" about to land during "Wings Over Illawarra". **Below:** SAC members at Frogs Hollow; Randall Krebs, Frank Krasso, Dave Thomas, George Hennessy, Bob Philips, Anne and Greg Goulding, Alice with Vic Laybutt, kneeling is Judy Krebs and David Rittie.



Greg "Silver Tonsils" Ackman at the microphone at "Wings Over Illawarra", Wollongong.



Contact your Newsletter Editor at
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Visit our website:- www.wedderburnairstrip.com.au
and see this whole Newsletter in full colour

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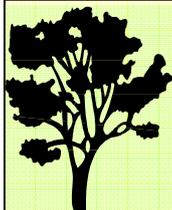
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Your new Committee: Margaret Nightingale (Secretary), Tara Stevermuer (Treasurer), Bret Cavanagh, John Duncan, Matthew Gray, Don Harvie, Vic Laybutt, and Gordon Steer.

The RAAF Roulettes PC9 display team at "Wings over Illawarra"

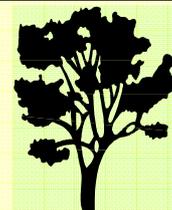


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Welcome to the **April/May '09** edition of your Newsletter. Your old Newsletter Editor (me) went unchallenged for the job at the elections, so you are stuck with me for another year.

Recent events include the Annual General Meeting, Wings over Illawarra and the fly-out to Frogs Hollow. You will find reports on these and other matters inside this issue, along with all the usual contributions from our office bearers.

May I suggest that you view this Newsletter on the website, where the whole thing appears in full colour.

Thanks to those who contributed to this issue. Enjoy.

David Rittie

You can contact your Newsletter Editor at david.rittie@optusnet.com.au

Words from the President

Hi there. Another Club year is under way. Here's the latest.

Your New Committee

The Committee that you voted in for this year is almost the same as last year. The only change is the inclusion of Don Harvie and the retirement of Nash Pilling.

Your new SAC Committee is: Margaret Nightingale (Secretary), Tara Stevermuer (Treasurer), Bret Cavanagh, John Duncan, Matthew Gray, Don Harvie, Vic Laybutt and Gordon Steer. Welcome back to the members of last year's Committee, and a special welcome to Don, who has been serving us well as our webmaster for the last few years.

Nash Pilling leaves the Committee after a notable career in the service of your Club. He headed up the Northern Development Sub-Committee in recent years, and is a former Club President. Nash will continue to assist us with insurance matters, and as the third member of the Hangar Sub-Committee. Thank you, Nash, for providing your wise counsel, and we hope you get to enjoy more flying time.

Let me close this subject by saying how much I really appreciate those others who stood for election onto the Committee. They are all worthy candidates, and I thank them all for having the dedication to stand for election.

Joining fees

As indicated by the membership at the March General Meeting, the joining fee will remain at \$3,000. There are some other new ideas that were discussed at the meeting about joining fees which will be announced shortly, after confirmation by the Committee. Will keep you posted on these new initiatives.

Lease

As announced at the March General Meeting, there has been some progress with the lease renewal process. The Dept. of Lands has informed us that requests for relevant information have been sent out to other Government departments. It's good to hear that some progress is being made on this front.

Taxiways

There will soon be some taxiway improvements carried out at the airfield. The dip in Taxiway "N", and runway entry/exits will be improved. Additionally, in order to make taxiing easier, some radii will be added to "tee" intersections where the east-west taxiways join the main north-south taxiway. This work will, most likely, already be under way when you read this newsletter.



Vandalism

There has been another case, recently, where a member's hangar was vandalised. It should be noted that such behaviour will not be tolerated. There will be an initiative soon to change our Club's rules to allow perpetrators of such behaviour, if they are Club members, to be immediately dismissed from the Club.

Five Year Plan

The updated Five Year Plan (FYP) will be presented to the membership at the June General Meeting. The plans for this year will probably not be as ambitious as the last two years have been, but, as announced at the last General Meeting, our plans for this term should include a toilet block in Hangar Row "P", and a septic system transpiration bed which can be tapped into by everyone in the Northern Precinct.

Electricity

As noted in the last two FYPs this is the year that we investigate the possibility of getting electrical power onto the airfield. We will be sending out a questionnaire to all members which will give us an idea of what our peak power and our standby power requirements might be. Our Member, Grahame Wood, will be lending some assistance with this enquiry, and when we are ready we will get everyone involved in a debate to decide the way ahead.

Open Day

Yes! I know it's a bit early yet, but we are looking for

somebody who will take on the task of organising the next Open Day, which we anticipate will be held on the first or second Sunday in November. *Any volunteers?*

Newsflashes

We are continually finding members who have access to emails, and who do not receive the weekly News-

flashes. If you have changed your email address or you wish to start receiving the latest news, please notify our webmaster, Don Harvey, at: *webmaster@wedderburnairstrip.com.au*, so that you can be kept up-to-date with Club matters. Don can include you in the “Newsflash” list and, if you wish, you can be added to the members

email list which is on the website for other member’s information. Please indicate to Don if you want your email address added to one or both of these lists.

That’s all for this issue, so, until next time, **please fly safely**

David Rittie

*** * SPECIAL NOTICE * ***

It has not yet been decided whether or not proxies will be allowed at the Special General Meeting scheduled for 18th April. Your Committee is seeking expert advice on this matter. We suggest you proceed as usual with proxies so they are ready for inclusion, if allowed. **David Rittie**

From the Secretary’s Desk

Hi Everyone

March Annual General Meeting and Committee Elections

Noel Carmody once again conducted our club committee elections with his usual great skill and efficiency. The club owes a debt of gratitude to all those who stood for election, including those who were unsuccessful this time, for their willingness to serve the club by donating their time and skills. This is

not always an easy task and is occasionally time consuming and full of criticism and heartbreak however the continuing support of the vast majority of members makes it all worthwhile and a rewarding experience overall.

114 ballot papers were distributed at the meeting and the results of the elections were as follows:-



President:	Dave Rittie	elected unopposed
Treasurer:	Tara Stevermuer	elected unopposed
Secretary:	Margaret Nightingale	elected unopposed

your behalf, making Napper Field a comfortable, rewarding and exciting place to be for members and their families and guests to enjoy.

Committee Members:

Matthew Gray	105 votes	elected
John Duncan	91 votes	elected
Bret Cavanagh	90 votes	elected
Don Harvie	87 votes	elected
Vic Laybutt	85 votes	elected
Gordon Steer	77 votes	elected
Nash Pilling	48 votes	
Rod Russell	46 votes	
Sam Randazzo	31 votes	

The Joining Fee

One of the items discussed at length at the General Meeting on 8th March was the joining fee. Members were asked for ideas, and a show of hands indicated the feelings of members present for the following suggestions:

- The club look at more categories of membership – for example a flying social member where the joining fee is \$1000.00 where the member doesn’t own an aircraft but has a pilot’s licence . . . 25 for and 24 against.
- The \$3000.00 could be payable in instalments over 3 to 5 years. This is already negotiable with the treasurer and the committee.
- Junior membership for those under 26 with an up front payment of \$500.00 and the balance of the \$3000.00 paid after turning 26. . . 32 for and 18 against.
- Cut the joining fee by 1/3 – back to \$2000.00. . . 8 for and 42 against.
- Social members who attend workdays could have

Nash Pilling has volunteered to continue to review the club’s insurances when they fall due, as this is but one of his areas of expertise. Other members may be called on by the Committee to help with the many and various tasks involved in the day-to-day administration of the club and its infrastructure. Thanks again to Noel and his band of efficient vote counters.

Congratulations to those who were elected to your committee for the next year. They are already working hard, on

their workday fees credited against their joining fee if they join. . . 30 for and 20 against.

The club could replace the lost revenue in lowering the joining fee by charging a transfer fee when hangars change hands. . . 4 for and 46 against.

Members under 21 pay \$3300.00 and the club pays for a limited number of flying lessons. . . 5 for and 45 against.

The committee will take these suggestions and indications of preferences away and discuss the alternatives.

The results of the Committee's deliberations will be on the agenda for the June General Meeting.

I hope to see you there and around the fantastic airfield of ours that we all love. We also love the sky above the field and should be up in it more often.

Happy buzzing about the sky

Margaret Nightingale

Treasurer's Report

Hi everyone,

THE GOLD PLATED RUNWAY

COULD THE CLUB HAVE AFFORDED IT WITHOUT THE PLEDGED MONEY?

What was budgeted?

Runway – \$197,000 for a two-coat spray seal runway with 200 metre long hot mix acceleration strips at each end.

Taxiways – \$43,000 for 5 metre wide, two coat spray seal.

Total – \$240,000

Why complete both the runway and taxiways at the same time?

Taxiways were long overdue (even though not all hangar owners had completed building as had been requested). Membership were demanding a sealed runway (not all members). Cost savings to complete both at the same time (in fact Sam Randazzo wanted to get the northern road sealed simultaneously for further cost savings but this had not been included in the budget, nor had not been discussed with the membership, and there were concerns about whether there was money sufficient to cover the cost if the committee approved it)

What did the budget allow for?

After seeking many quotes the budget set was based on achieving the described runway above within the quoted amount. Having said this, the committee being concerned at spending such a large amount of money and being all too aware that projects have a tendency to over-run even the best managed budgets, did neither want to waste club money nor put the club in a financial position where we could not afford to pay contractors due to over-runs (even a 10% over-run would be a large amount of club money for this project). The budgeted amount also had to take into consideration the fact that we did not know how much rent we would be charged, nor how quickly annual subs would be received in order to cover this large bill. We also had to have money to cover any unexpected bills (and there were some...). The committee also had to ensure sufficient funds to continue running all other areas of the club – not just sufficient for the runway.

The pledge money agreement

The committee agreed to build the “gold plated” runway (full length, full width hot mix bitumen) condi-

tional upon receipt of a minimum \$40,000 pledge money, which was the difference between the runway that was currently going to be built and the gold plated runway, obtainable through the hard work of Sam Randazzo (thank you). This effectively extended the budgeted amount for the runway to \$237,000 (and the total budget for the combined project to \$280,000). As soon as the contracts were accepted to commence work on the runway all pledges were to be honoured.



An aside: I have to say, that in the current economic climate I was surprised that no member that pledged money was not in a position to honour their pledge – I did honestly expect with the bottom falling out of the stock market and self-funding pensioners losing thousands that we would receive several apologies for not being able to fulfil their wish to pledge money to the runway. Thank you to all that pledged and paid – we have a beautiful runway because of you all.

How much pledge money was received?

To date, pledges for the “gold plated” runway total \$47,349.

How much was spent on the runway and taxiways combined project?

\$325,433 has been spent so far on these two projects (this is \$45,433 more than was budgeted – an overrun of 16.2%). I say “so far” because over \$7,000 will be spent on improvements to Runway Entry/Exits 1,2 and 3 and Taxiway “N”, and radii will be added to the “tee” intersections of the east/

west taxiways and the main north/south taxiway.

To date the runway has cost the club \$244,202 (this compares well to the budgeted amount of \$237,000 – overrun of \$7,202 or 3.0%). While to date the taxiways have cost the club \$81,231 (this is well over the budgeted amount of \$43,000 – overrun of \$38,231 or 88.9%) and is still to increase. It was fear of such an overrun that caused the committee to be cautious about how much of the club money to spend solely on the runway in the first place!

Other surprise expenses along the way...

I was concerned enough about budget overruns, non payment of pledges and dwindling bank account balances without needing to finance other large and unplanned expenses. As soon as we gave the green light to the runway and taxiway works we suddenly were confronted with termites in the club house (\$5,680) and the hot water system blew up (\$1,888) – the maintenance budgets we set had sufficient funds to cover these.

How much money was left in the club's bank account?

At its lowest point the club's bank account reached \$78,229 (down from \$450,000).

So, could the club have afforded the gold runway without the pledge money?

If all \$47,349 pledged money was returned to the pledgers the club's bank account would have reached a low of \$30,880 (\$78,229 - \$47,349). So in the literal sense given the club's bank account remained above \$0 **YES** the club had sufficient funds to cover all bills **BUT** I ask you, would you consider this to have been wise financial management? What if, the runway costs had had a more

significant overrun in costs? What if due to severe financial pressures many club members were late in paying their annual subs this year? What if the Department of Lands had radically increased our rent again? What if our insurance costs rise significantly? What if...what if...what if! Would you run your finances this close to zero dollars?

So while literally and after the fact (i.e. after all expenses planned and unplanned have been taken into account) the club could have afforded the gold plated runway with \$30k to spare I still believe that the financial management decision made by the Committee to only spend \$197,000 of club members' money was the correct decision, and was a sound financial management decision, and therefore, in saying that, it infers **the club could not afford the gold runway without the pledge money.**

You have the dollars involved – you decide for yourself.

Lessons learnt from this project...

- Management of project-specific sub-committees (allow members with knowledge in the area of the project to guide requirements)
- Ensure clear guidelines are then used by the sub-committee to ensure quotes obtained match what has been requested and can be easily compared by the committee
- Clearly identify to the contractor who has sign off and who can make changes to specs on a project
- No matter how hard you try to do the best by the club as a whole **YOU CAN'T PLEASE EVERYONE!**

Blue Skies,

Tara Stevermuer

* * * **UPCOMING FLYING AND SOCIAL EVENTS** * * *

If you want to stage an event, or invite the Club to join you on a flying jaunt please talk to me. You will earn additional Championship points. As you can see below, we need some more events for 2009. **Bret Cavanagh**

UPCOMING EVENTS. Put 'em in your diary

April 9-12 (Thur-Sun)	Natfly (RAAus Annual Fly-in), Narromine	[Contact: David Rittie]
April 11, 12 (Sat, Sun)	Temora Museum flying display	[Not a Club event]
April 18 (Saturday)	Special General Meeting , 4pm Clubhouse.	[Contact: Margaret Nightingale]
April 24-26 (Fri-Sun)	AAAA National Fly-in , Echuca.	[Contact: Matthew Gray]
May 3 (Sunday)	Fly-in/Drive-in Brunch , 10am to 1pm, Clubhouse	[Contact: Margaret Adams]
May 8-10 (Fri-Sun)	Middlebrook Station Fly-Away , near Scone	[Contact: Vic Laybutt]
May 9 (Saturday)	April's Social Workday . Free lunch. Sign in at 0900	[Contact: Matthew Gray]
May 17 (Sunday)	Fashion Parade Extraordinaire , see poster on Page 12	[Contact: Margaret Adams]
June 14 (Sunday)	General Meeting , Clubhouse, 2pm	[Contact: Margaret Nightingale]
June/July sometime	Cowra & Ilandra Castle Fly Away , two day weekend	[Contact: David Rittie]
August ? ? ?	Help . We need someone to arrange a flying event	[Contact: ? ? ? ? ?]

Hello everyone, and welcome to issue two for 2009

Well, it appears that the majority of you are happy with me to continue on with looking after workdays and remaining on the committee for yet another year, so... thank you all, and I hope to serve you as best I can over the next 12 months. Whilst the pay is not good, the intent to do the best we can (individually or as part of the committee) and deliver to better this club is always there, regardless of whatever "Issues or Happenings" (whatever you would like to call it) are going on from time to time.

Ok, down to tin tacks, the Social/Workday for April has been shifted to May. Saturday May 09 is now the day that has been set aside for Social/Workday Number 2. It would appear that a lot is going on in the aviation world right now with fly aways - the Antique Aeroplane Association of Australia just to name one that is a big draw for a number of Wedderburnians (and hence the deferral), although this new date, still clashes with another organized trip away...busy, busy, busy – but...what can you do, it has to happen some time

With February's day being a bit of a washout (which of course is an understatement), it is hoped that we can catch up on some of the jobs hanging on since then. To that, we still need to clean up behind hangar D4 – for some reason this has been dragging on for what feels like eons, but with a bit of luck we might just complete this task this time around. There is also painting of the Generator Shed, some electrical work around the clubhouse and the continuing Pot Hole issue on the main road to contend with. It goes without saying, that there is the usual fire hazard reduction. (Everyone loves that



one.) Arrrhhh.

As usual there will be a complete list posted on the Website around a week or so before the big day, so be sure to take a look, and come prepared as necessary for what you would like to get involved with. As usual, any tools or other equipment you can bring from home never goes astray.

The current list of attendees for February's Workday has been posted on the website. If there are any issues with your record of attendance, please let me know now – as mentioned on previous occasions,

the list for all of these Social/Work days is made up of those who signed onto the sheets in the clubhouse, and before 9.30am on the day – if you're going to be late due to traffic or some other problem en-route, let me know..... otherwise you won't be able to record the credit against your name after this time – this is just to keep it fair for everyone who does make it there on time

So that's if for now, and...without wanting to turn the Social/Workday Column into the "For Sale" Classifieds Section, after a long and careful consideration, I am looking at listing the Airedale for sale. If anyone is interested or knows of someone who might be interested, drop me a line, I'd be happy to send some photos and a spec sheet to them

See you on Saturday May 09. Kind Regards

Matthew Gray
Social Workday Coordinator



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Hi Everyone,

Here we are into Autumn, the best time of the year for our pilots to enjoy their flying and let us hope they all enjoy attending the many fly-aways that have been arranged for the months of April and May.

Well! what a great day our first Social Work Day of the new year, held on Sunday the 15th February 2009, turned out to be. It certainly was very encouraging to see so many of our newer members in attendance to help with all the various projects that needed to be tackled, and from looking around the Airfield all the jobs were carried out well.



The Social Committee made the decision to serve a variety of gourmet sandwiches, cakes and fresh fruit for a change from BBQ and we know everyone enjoyed the selection of food as we had no complaints. We were surprised at the numbers we served lunch to, in all there were 77 members and visitors who joined us. It was so good to have a big roll up to this Work Day.

I was thrilled to welcome many of the newer Lady members all wanting to help our team in the preparation of the Luncheon for all present. I would like to “Thank” Dot, Jacquie, Judy, Veronica, Lorraine, Merle, Rachel, Wendi, Glenda, Anne and Alice (Vic’s friend) – to all of you I did appreciate your wonderful help in making our day so successful. A special “Thank” you to Vittoria who only became an associate member on our Work Day and was happy to join in with all of us – we did enjoy your company Vittoria, and we hope to see you again soon. We were also lucky to have Dot’s sister Valerie along to lend a hand, and I know she enjoyed her day with the Ladies. We appreciate your valued help Valerie. To our junior assistants Lilli and Abbey: a big “Thank” you – as usual you were both terrific.

I must “Thank” everyone who bought Raffle tickets on the Work Day. First prize of \$50.00 cash was won by Paul McGuire and 2nd Prize of \$25.00 cash was won by Mikailo Eric. Well done to the winners.

ON SUNDAY 8TH MARCH, 2009 WE CELEBRATED 30 YEARS SINCE OUR INAUGURAL GENERAL MEETING WHICH WAS HELD ON 10TH FEBRUARY, 1979

As I explained in the last Newsletter it was decided to hold our celebration of our 30th on the same day as our AGM on the 8th March. It was a most successful day and we were so happy to have 27 of our past members accept the invitation to come and join in with our present members and invited local residents for a BBQ luncheon. Over 80 people enjoyed a delicious luncheon of BBQ steak and sausages, cooked by SAC Committee man Bret Cavanagh with help from our master Chef Dave Thomas, together with a great spread of cold chicken, various salads etc. The SAC Committee did a great job in organising the Luncheon for our visitors and members. It was so good to welcome and chat with many of our foundation members who had not been out to our Airfield for many years, they were very impressed with what they saw and how we have grown over the 30 years.

After our enjoyable lunch it was time for our President, David Rittie, to present framed Life Membership Awards and to relate a brief history on each of the 11 SAC Life Members. These Life Memberships had been awarded from 1979 to 2006 and this presentation was formally documenting the awards. The Club’s Life Members given framed Awards on 8th March, 2009 are Ian Harvie,

Steve & Joyce Cavanagh, Dorothy McSparron, who was also handed one for her late husband Jack McSparron, Margaret Adams, who was also handed one for her late partner Gordon Crampton.

Bob Phillips framed Life Membership Award had been presented to him by David, at a recent Fly Away. George Hennessy and Arthur Napper were not able to join us on our special celebration day and their Life Membership Awards will be posted to them shortly. Ron Lalor, our No.1 member, was presented with his Life Membership Award just before our General and AGM meeting got under way. I would like to "Thank" David for organising the presentation of our Awards.

FLY-IN / DRIVE-IN BRUNCH - SUNDAY 3rd MAY, 2009 10.00 A.M. TO 1.00 P.M.

Sorry, we had a mix up with dates for both the Fly-In/Drive-In Brunch and the Social Work Day both to be held in May. The Fly-In/ Drive-In Brunch will definitely be held on Sunday 3rd May.

We would like to see as many of our members come along to enjoy a few hours with us. The Social Committee will be serving the always popular Brunch of O.J. selection of Cereals, Sausages, Bacon & Eggs on toast etc. all for the wonderful price of \$8.00 per head. Invitations will be sent to our friends at nearby Aero Clubs to come and join us so remember the date to come and mix with your fellow aviators.

SOCIAL WORK DAY - NOW CHANGED TO SATURDAY 9TH MAY

Yes! our Social Work Day with **FREE LUNCH** will be held on this day and we would like as many members to come along and put in a few hours of hard work to make our Airfield look spic and span, then relax and enjoy a delicious lunch prepared by the Ladies of the Social Committee. The Menu for the 9th will be Cold Chicken and Meat platters with various salads followed by a selection of cakes. Please make sure you place your name on the Luncheon List, when you first register your name on arrival in the Clubhouse, so that we have an idea of the numbers of members staying for lunch.

FASHION PARADE EXTRAORDINAIRE

SUNDAY 17TH MAY, 2009 CLUBHOUSE WEDDERBURN TIME: 2.00 P.M.

We are indebted to Wendi Leigh for accepting our invitation to hold a Fashion Parade in our Clubhouse.

Wendi, exclusive designer of fashion, will be hosting this exciting afternoon and the Social Committee of SAC would like to invite our members and in particular Associate members, partners of our members, relatives, friends and local Wedderburn residents to come along and view some very unique fashion designs by Wendi. We are looking for 5 models, sizes 12, 14, 16, 18, 20 and I would like to see some of our group of ladies accept the challenge to become a model for the afternoon.

Wendi has given us a delightful Poster about this event and which appears on **Page 12** of this Newsletter.

We will be asking for a Gold Coin donation for the cost of the afternoon tea we will be serving, and there will also be a Lucky Door Prize.

I, for one, am looking forward to seeing all these beautiful designs from Wendi Leigh International.

For bookings to attend on Sunday 17th May could you please contact Margaret Adams, Email: mda@isp.net.au, or Phone: 9567 6522 by Wednesday 13th May.

Cheers,

Margaret Adams

Wings Over Illawarra, 22nd February

Numerous SAC members made the short trip south to enjoy "Wings Over Illawarra" on Sunday 22 February at Wollongong Airport. This would normally be our first Social Workday for the year, but it had been moved to the week earlier so that we could all attend the HARS big day.

Even though the sky was overcast those who attended were treated to a special and interesting day which fortunately remained cool due to the cloudy conditions.

All were rewarded with a great day seeing some classic aircraft. These included the usual suspects like the Super "Connie" (Lockheed L1049), DC3/C47s, Neptune bombers and the "Black Cat" Catalina. Other interesting aircraft on display included the Ericson Skycrane, the RAAF C130J, Hawker Hunter and the Cessna Dragonfly. A RAAF Hawk lead-in Fighter Trainer was also on display. This was all topped off with two dis-

plays performed by the RAAF Roulettes.

Other noteworthy attractions included Roy Fox's Dragon Rapide and the bright yellow coloured Tiger Moth.

Just to add to the attraction were some interesting and well restored sports cars, mainly Jaguars, and also there was an area full of model aircraft ranging from big to even bigger flying models, all magnificently presented. A Super Modified speedway car (I think they call them "sprint cars" these days) also attracted a crowd because of its big inverted wing and shiny V8 engine.

Our Club was well represented at Wollongong. Sy Allsep had his Twin Pioneer on display, "Silver Tonsils" Greg Ackman's voice was continually blaring out over the P.A. system, and many SAC members' best presented aircraft were on display.



From what I can gather The following SAC members were present at the event: Greg Ackman, Sy Allsep, Phil Ayrton, Peter Bowman, Leigh Cunneen, Wes Dunn, Matthew Gray, Rick Harper, Kevin Haydon, Peter Hodgens, Sandy Howard, Ian Kersley, Randall Krebs, Frank Krassoi, Vic Laybutt, Naomi and Jay Laybutt (with Siahn), Lisa and Ashley Laybutt (with Cameron), June Nicholson, Martin Ongley, Sam Randazzo, David Rittie, Tara and Bernie Stevermuer (with Sebastian), Dave Thomas.

Please let me know if I have forgotten anyone.

David Rittie

Frogs Hollow, 1st March

Phil Ayrton had invited all SAC members go to Frogs Hollow to help celebrate the official opening of their new clubhouse, which would include the mandatory BBQ, and also that we "dribble toato sauce" all over the floor as part of the Christening process.

The weather forecast indicated that flying conditions would be OK for flying but the wiser ones amongst us knew better. Some flew down a few days early, and some drove to ensure that they did not miss out on all the fun. As it turned out the weather was very marginal. Many completed the journey, but some were forced to turn back due to poor visibility.

The BBQ proceeded as only it can at Frogs, and soon after everyone had finished eating Dame Edna Everidge

and Luciano Pavarotti surprisingly arrived (in a beautifully restored vintage Chrysler Plymouth) to officially open the new clubhouse.

Dame Edna was at her most humorous and Pavarotti sang like the Great Caruso. It was difficult to accept that they were impersonators, but they were good, very good. Eventually Dame Edna cut the ribbon and the clubhouse was officially declared "open", even though the floor was by now, already well covered in to-mato sauce.

One of our members commented: "What a great "show" put on by SAAA Chapter 23/Frogs Hollow Flyers, at Frogs Hollow for the official opening of their Club Rooms on Sunday 1st March. They sure have influential members - particularly John,

the undertaker - to arrange such high level stars to attend & carry out the official duties - Dame Edna Everidge to cut the ribbon, and her good friend Luciano Pavarotti (the Opera singer, no bloody less!!) - Think about that!! Despite the weather, what a great attendance, at a great spot, presented by a great group of aviation enthusiasts."

SAC members who attended included Greg and Anne Goulding, George Hennessy, Frank and Maryanne Krassoi, Randall and Judy Krebs, Vic Laybutt and Alice, Bob and Marya Phillips, David Rittie, Dave Thomas.

Some other members attempted to attend but were thwarted by the weather, they included Phil Ayrton, Peter Bowman, Leigh Cunneen and Matthew Gray.

David Rittie

Around the middle of 1981 while I was working in South Africa, a friend phoned me to ask if I would advertise his project Aeronca Chief throughout the local EAA chapter. He mentioned the price which was very reasonable, and then said, "You've finished the rebuild of your Stinson, are you interested in a new project?" He knocked \$500 off the price and I found myself saying 'yes'- after all I would need something cheaper than the Stinson to fly when I eventually retired.

I duly hauled it home on a trailer and put it in my workshop. It was pretty much a basket case and I didn't get a lot done on it as I was busy flying the Stinson.

A complete set of logs came with it. The first entry was marked as "Air test in USA ½ hour". In 1947 the plane was shipped to South Africa and used by a flying school in the Natal Province. The aircraft was used for training and charter purposes. In those days the name of the pilot who flew the airplane was also recorded in the aircraft log book. Among the names are those now well known in South African aviation circles.

Later I was to learn that one of those pilots was an old family friend. She was Natal Province's first female commercial pilot and later moved to Australia. Mavis now lives in Western Australia and we still keep in touch.

The log books showed an interesting history including an off airport landing where a wing was damaged. Fortunately there had been an Aeronca Champ damaged after it was blown over in a high wind. The good wing from the Champ was fitted to the Chief. In 1949 it was sold to a farmer from South West Africa (now Namibia). He puddle jumped it right across the continent. He had several farms in South West Africa and the plane was used to fly between them. I heard the most horrific stories

about the lack of landing areas he used to fly in and out of.

Annuals were carried out at Windhoek, the capital of South West Africa, however there were many gaps, time wise, between entries in the logs and I believe that when the annual was due he just kept flying and didn't log any time. It appears most of the maintenance was carried out by the farmer who only took the plane to Windhoek for complex repairs. A new annual would be carried out and he would once again start logging time.

In August 1954 the plane was flown to Pretoria S.A. and a C85-12F engine was fitted together with the dorsal fin kit and Hanlon Wilson mufflers. At this point there were 930 hours recorded in the logs. In 1963 the fabric was replaced and 1145 hours were recorded in the log book. The Annual inspection in April 1969 shows 1604 hours. There were no more entries logged after this date.

At some stage after this, the aircraft was sold to a Bank Manager, Chris Bezuidenhout, in Windhoek. He later moved back to Kroonstad in South Africa. He brought the Chief with him and I purchased it from Chris in 1981. I got to know Chris while restoring my Stinson. He had also restored a Stinson and completed two homebuilt aircraft. The old farmer had retired to Pretoria by this time and I contacted him and took him flying in my Stinson. He was well into his eighties but still looked fit and stood ram-rod straight.

I had started to work intermittently on the fuselage, and it quickly became obvious the farmer had done various repairs himself as the attach plates for the inner ends of the axles had broken and had been welded back into place very badly with an arc welder. The undercarriage bolts were bent and worn oval. The oleos could not even be repaired so I

bought new ones from Univair and rebushed the frames. There were no door handles, and I was told he flew the plane with a rope tied between the doors, holding them closed.

I had made new stringers before returning to Australia in August 1983, and had both the Stinson and the Chief shipped out to Australia.

After settling in and buying a property, and all that goes with returning after twenty years away, I started back onto the Chief. I was travelling a lot and never seemed to have enough time to work on it. I bead blasted the fuselage, replaced all the wood, stripped the engine, (and found the crankshaft worn below limits, and a cracked cylinder). As I was travelling quite often to the States on business I managed several trips to Oshkosh, and was able to purchase many of the parts I needed including a yellow tagged crankshaft. All the other engine parts were sourced from El Reno. I took the engine to Melbourne for assembly and after a couple of years it came back looking like new. (OK, so I did tell them I wasn't in too much of a hurry).

By this time I had covered the fuselage, tail feathers and ailerons. I had made all new interior upholstery, a new lower instrument panel section, (the original had a huge hole for an old "slip and skid" instrument from a de Havilland Tiger Moth. A wind driven vane type ASI had been fitted to the jury strut.) The completed fuselage was then taken to my hanger at Wedderburn in mid 2003. I then had more room in my workshop to commence work on the wings.

Between 1995 and 2003 I had been flying an Auster that belonged to Frank Luke. The original cotton was still on the fuselage and was well past its use by date, I put the Chief to one side to do a quick recover job for Frank. This turned out to be a complete restoration of the whole airframe, including all new wood work, bulkheads, stringers etc. After three

years of hard work the Auster was finished and awarded "Best Auster" at the annual Antique Aeroplane Association of Australia, (AAAA), Auster fly in.

In October 2006, I started back on the wings of the Chief. Many ribs were beyond repair, but over the years I had bought spare ribs from Univair. The spars were checked out by John Gallagher, and found to be sound.

Not long after recommencing on the Aeronca I retired from full time work and tackled the wing rebuild with a vengeance and the right wing was

completed by the end of 2007. The left wing was completed 6 months later and in July 2008, with the help of Bert and David Faulkner, my son Don and my granddaughters Lilli & Grace, the wings were attached to the fuselage using a chain block to lift them into position. Another six months of work rigging control surfaces and a very frustrating period of trying to get engine oil pressure finally saw the aircraft ready to fly.

On the 10th March 2009 after inspection by Kel Gore, a ferry permit was issued and the aircraft test flown at Wedderburn.

Dave Thomas took pictures of the first take-off nearly 40 years after the last logged flight and 28 years since I acquired the project. The subsequent ferry flight to Wagga for it's first Australian annual inspection went flawlessly with the aircraft very stable and able to be flown hands off in cruise.

That's a great story Ian. Thanks for sharing it with us, and congratulations on your success.

Some photos appear on the top of the next page.

Ed

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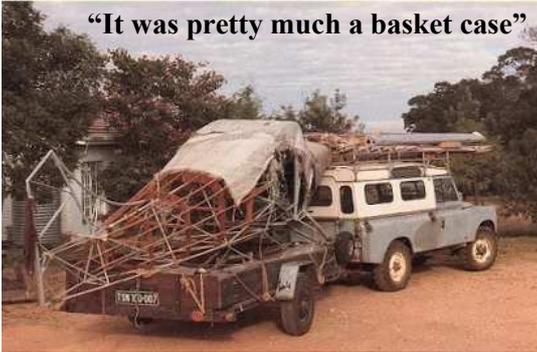
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“It was pretty much a basket case”



Above: Ian Harvie’s Restoration Project. **Below left:** By popular demand: two pictures of Siahn Laybutt, daughter of Naomi and Jay, and grand daughter of Vic Laybutt and David Rittie



Above Right: Ron Lalor is presented with his “Life Membership” certificate at the AGM. **Below left:** Pavarotti and Dame Edna (look-a-likes) arrive at Frogs Hollow to help open the new clubhouse. **Below right:** Dame Edna cuts the ribbon while Pavarotti and Dave Thomas look on.



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Above: SAC members Peter Hodgens, June Nicholson, and Kevin Haydon getting ready to depart in the Lancair IV, Frank Krassoi's Acrosport. **Below:** The Cessna Dragonfly, and Matthew Gray's Airedale



Above: The Ericson Skycrane on display. Peter Bowman and Phil Ayrton's RV4s. **Below:** Sy Allsep's Twin Pioneer attracted a lot of attention, and one of the HARS Neptune Bombers



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