



April 2004

Watts News

A newsletter issued by the Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield

The President's Report



Two unique Watts Bridge features are the variety of aircraft flown by homebase groups and its scenic location upstream from a major city water supply. Most of us have had the pleasure of aerially viewing the marvellous interplay between land and water in the Wivenhoe area. Surely one great advantage of Watts Bridge

over other airfields.

Together with this scenic location comes environmental responsibility and opportunity. The Board of Management is now promoting the airfield as a

shining example of environmental best practice in or outside Australia but it only needs one member doing the wrong thing to tarnish the shine.

Airfield owners will soon be introduced to procedures that will be adhered to so that our effluent system is always held at EPA standards or better. Watts Bridge puts nothing into the catchment area now and as the airfield develops we will ensure that effluent flows are re-cycled into transpiration areas containing trees shrubs and gardens - an environmental closed loop system. This is consistent with our airpark theme. I encourage every WB member to commit to positioning our airfield at the forefront of environmental best practice.

Mike Nelson

Aerobatics at Watts Bridge – by Clive Tudge

Is it the last Sunday in the month? YES, great, we're off to Watts Bridge for a day of fun and excitement. Watts Bridge conjures up memories of great World War II bombers lumbering down the huge grass runway and climbing slowly but surely into the neighbouring hills but when the Aerobatic Club hits the airfield now it's a totally different story.

What a great place for the Queensland Aerobatic Club to practise and hold competitions; clear airspace next to the huge runway, understanding neighbours, understanding fellow aviators, on site refuelling and all this only _ hour from Brisbane.

So we're strapped in and ready to go, clear prop and let's get taxing. The sweat starts to drip and the brain is working at full speed. The climb to 3,500 feet seems to take forever but somehow I don't see



the beautiful hills around Watts Bridge. Where's the 'box'? An imaginary square on the ground 1km x 1km wide; it's this road, up to this dam, down to this fence andOh no I'm at height, come on start the run in, dive, wing waggle, straight and level, watch the wing (ah, remembered this time), pull and up and over, straight and level (where's the box? Ah well, pull anyway), up and over to 45, roll, pull, straight and level (oh s... what's next? Read the sequence, what that thing?). And so it goes on until all of a sudden it's over; gee that was quick!

Back to the Airfield, it's just there. "Sorry, Mal, what was that? Practise engine failure!" Get out, I'm exhausted from the sequence and you want me to do what?

Back on the ground at Watts it's time to discuss the faults with fellow aviators who take great delight in

Aerobatics at Watts Bridge – continued

telling you your mistakes (That's all right 'cos I do it too.) It's time to have a coffee and talk about how good we really are and to talk about aviation with other like minds at 'The Bridge'. We are very fortunate to have the Vintage Aircraft Group let us use their facilities so that we can have some lunch and coffee and we bump into the other like minded Aviation lovers to share our thrills and spills.

So ends another fantastic day at Watts Bridge. It gets better every time we come here and makes you even more passionate about Aviation! The Aerobatic Club has signed the lease on a block of land and we look forward to having our own club house here one day. Thanks to the Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield members for creating such a great place and environment for aviation enjoyment.

Caboulture Gliding Club's Report

By Richard Friday

The Caboulture Gliding Club committee realised some time ago that it should make some serious attempts to secure its future by establishing an alternate permanent gliding base at Watts Bridge Memorial Airfield.

We acquired our winch from a defunct club in central northern NSW around the Warialda area. It is powered by a Ford 351 driving a standard 3 speed automatic gearbox directly onto a drum with a minimum diameter of 460mm and a fully spooled diameter of 920mm.

Our first winching efforts conducted in January 2000 weren't exactly an unqualified success as the winch had trouble developing sufficient power. Only two launches got off the ground, and when the glider signalled for more power the winch was unable to deliver. Subsequent fiddling about with the ignition system only made things worse. In desperation the carburettor was removed and taken away for overhaul. The

winching efforts were terminated and we reverted to aerotow.

The weekend wasn't a complete failure however because we successfully proved the concept of the operation to the satisfaction of the acting RTO/Ops. Our ability to operate in conjunction with the other users of the airfield seems assured as well as the apparent success of the multistrand winch wire.



Half a year after our first winching attempts, I was able to sit down and complete this report. In mid July 2000, we dual towed a Blanik and Club Libelle the 50 odd Km's to Watts Bridge to commence

winch conversions for instructors and solo club pilots. Major teething problems have been solved and we were reliably attaining around 1,400' agl in nil wind conditions. We felt that the additional weight of the wire rope was costing us about 200-300 feet. With a head wind we might see 1,800' or so. Both aircraft were able to get away, so the system worked! Considering that there was a high pressure system parked over SE Queensland producing stable conditions we were very happy with the result. For the record we are using about one statute mile of runway, so the 1/3 height to cable length rule of thumb seems about right.

View from the short rope during the dual tow over Somerset Dam and Mount Brisbane to Watts Bridge

With two tugs, a winch, two gliding sites and a healthy membership the outlook for gliding at Watts looks pretty good.

Gyros make progress

Good news is being made with the gyro homebase group. Four learners soloed in 6 days recently. Their progress is such that we expect all four to have their licences by the time this newsletter is published. While members come from all walks of life it is interesting to note that gyro instructor Allan Wardill's paid job is that of a 747 check captain. He just loves gyros as an alternative to Jumbos. Any other aviator that sees the light is welcome to join our distinctive aviation interest. Known as the South East Queensland Gyroplane Club Inc.(SEQGC) the club meets on the weekend of the second Saturday each month. Why not check us out?

Ian Sganzerla

Just a reminder

Airchalet and Commercial Owners are reminded that the 250% increase in WB valuations are still under review by the Valuer-General. As current levels are still in place this means that there will have to be a one-off increase (backdated) once the new determination has been made. Airchalet and commercial owners please note that the next meeting will be held at Ross Stenhouse's no 32, 1pm on Sunday April 4.

Inaugural combined meeting of the Board of Management and the Airfield Council

held on February 10th.

The first combined meeting of the management groups was congenial and constructive. Issues discussed included confirmation of the Airfield Council as being responsible for development and implementation of new operational by-laws and also confirmation of its role as the facilitating body charged with assisting homebase groups to hold airfield events and fly-ins. Some concerns were aired by AC representatives to the Board of Management regarding the difficult issue of fencing adjacent to Silverleaves Rd. As a result Rod Mill is investigating the cost of a row of removable, flexible, reflective fibreglass 'wands' in place of the fence until we get a political solution.

Currently the Airfield Council is assisting the Board of Management in obtaining WBMA member consensus on what our priorities are for the future. This requirement has been made by the Department of State Development as it seeks to promote and assist Watts Bridge development within Government. Once consensus is gained there will be a meeting between WBMA members and State Development at Mt Beppo Hall. The date for this meeting will be circulated as soon as we have concluded the process of gaining consensus.

QVAG Breakfast Fly-In

February saw the start of the social calendar for the Queensland Vintage Aeroplane Group, with the first of its breakfast fly-in's for 2004.

The workers arrived on the Saturday to mow around the clubhouse and prepare for the Sunday. As usual there were a few people from around the airfield that joined the organizers on the Saturday night at the QVAG clubhouse for a few drinks and a hearty dinner prepared by our own hard working Robyn Bernhardt.

There is always dinner available and a good social evening the night prior to a fly-in, and everyone is welcome, just let us know if you wish to eat so we can adjust our catering.

Sunday morning it was up early and setting up for the first arrivals. The weather being so hot we

decided to go away from the full cooked breakfast, and lent towards a more continental style of breakfast. Diners would be treated to an array of cereals, fruit platters, juices, toast, scrambled eggs, tea and coffee for a very modest introductory price. Around 08.00 the first aircraft arrived, and they continued to arrive until we had a very healthy 22 aircraft in attendance, a very pleasing result for the first event of the year.

QVAG has a variety of events planned for this year including an Aeromodellers fly-in, you can keep up with what's on by checking our website www.qvag.org.au or the Watts Bridge website. We look forward to seeing our Watts Bridge friends at the next event.

Shane Winter



Inaugural Anzac Day Ceremony at the airfield

Members are advised that the inaugural Anzac Day Remembrance Ceremony will be held at the Airfield Memorial Cairn at 0700 hrs on April 25. During the ceremony the Toogoolawah Masonic Lodge will be presenting a flagpole to WBMA. This gesture is appreciated and it is fitting that it be presented on Anzac Day. Please note this occasion in your diary as we would like to have a good number of members involved.