



August 2003

# Watts News

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

## Good news in the making

You will notice in the summary of our last meeting that Ian Perkins, Barry Hempel and Gus de Laat have been doing some valuable groundwork in regard to acquainting the Director of Regional Development, Steve Moriarty, of the potential of Watts Bridge and the contribution it can make to aviation interests in the region. Often sowing the seed takes time to yield results so we should not be discouraged if developments aren't immediate. Sufficient to say that the secretary (Janice) has received a

positive letter from the Minister highlighting initiatives intended for regional development in the State Budget. Janice intends to respond, seeking further information on funding grants criteria so that our collective efforts secure some of this funding for the airfield. Another heartening development is the current second look by Regional Development at the alignment of airfield ownership in the context of the Abnett Report. In the light of these positive trends all our members need to see Watts

Bridge as if we were on the outside looking in. This gets us away from some of those inward-looking mindsets and behaviours from the past that have tended to diminish the professional image that we want to project.

**Next meeting is at Richard and Glenda's, no 17 (please bring a chair) on Sunday August 3 at 1pm.**

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

## Personality Profile: Derek Robinson

Derek hails from Ilford on the east side of London. He was six when the war started in 1939 and vividly remembers the battle of Britain and the blitz. Collecting jagged chunks of shrapnel and other debris from the war going on overhead was a favourite interest for the kids in those days. He served three years in the R.E.M.E. training as a fitter and working on tanks, armoured cars and trucks in the U.K. and Hong Kong. April 1963 he arrived in Australia as a migrant. By the end of the year he was operating a boat, taking fishing trips in Hervey Bay. In 1966 Derek bought a yacht and cruised the Queensland coast, the following year he started building concrete boats at Bulimba, in partnership with Tom Barter. In 1971 he launched a new yacht. 1980 found him boat building at Meldale near Donnybrook until he retired.

Derek started flying at Caboolture March 1995 with a Thruster T300. Training with Jenee Robin, then with Tony Hayes at Watts Bridge, he obtained his licence with Tony in July. In February 1996 he commenced building one of the new Jabiru kits with the 2200 engine, which had just become available. After a lot of paperwork provided by S.A.A.A.

and C.A.S.A. and a little enjoyable labour he had the first flight in 28-1830 in October 96.

Derek continued to enjoy flying 28-1830 until September 97, when he regretfully sold it to Ian Rhodes of Casino. Ian sold the Jabiru to a buyer from Victoria the following year and sadly crashed in bad visibility near Tenterfield. The two aboard were killed and the aircraft totally destroyed.

After being without an aeroplane for a few months Derek bought an old Thruster Gemini (25-025) with a history as a training aircraft in N.T. After some tidying up he flew this aircraft during most of 1998 before selling it to

South Grafton club to be used for training once again. In 1999 Derek acquired another Thruster, this time a single seat, 10-490 which he still has.

Towards the end of February 2000 He took delivery of the Jabiru SP kit, which is his current aircraft. This second Jabiru went together with no serious problems; the approvals and paperwork are so user friendly with the new experimental / amateur rules. The first flight was 5th July, 2000 for 19-3352 and 240 hours later he is still flying her.

Derek owns Air Chalet Site 15 and is currently a member of our working party for the new constitution.



# A Summary of the Management Committee meeting Tuesday June 17

There were the usual housekeeping details to be attended to together with some property matters that need to be addressed.

Unfortunately site lease fees are to be increased by 12% to make up for the past years when management failed to keep the increases going in line with the annual CPI as required by the constitution. The M.C. affirmed that this failure will not be repeated.

Ian Perkins gave an upbeat report on the workshop he attended with Barry and Gus. It would seem that as Watts Bridge is not subjected to urban development pressures in the way many airfields are; it is one of the front runners for strategic development in the region. Ian also spoke of a conversation he had with the Base Commander RAAF Amberley. It seems that the heavy transport squadron is moving from Richmond and is relocating at Amberley. This has ADF training operations potential for Watts Bridge. Ian intends to writing to Base Commander Amberley formalising Watts Bridge's readiness to assist the ADF (possibly seeking some assistance in return).

Ian Sganzerla has discovered a ride-on mower in good condition that the Committee can purchase for \$1500. Approval was given to proceed with the purchase.

Jeff Underhill has discovered an insurance company that will insure up to forty volunteers for accident and personal injury for a modest premium. This is timely given Rod Mill's hand injury sustained whilst working on the mower. The insurance policy is being looked into by Jeff Underhill and John McCarron.

Finally, at around 10.30 pm after several cups of coffee and considerable discussion, the M.C. unanimously recommended that the alterations to the constitution be adopted for presentation to the AGM. Our thanks to the M.C. and also to our working party for their patient perseverance and innovative approach.

## A summary of the last meeting at Bill Finlen's on June 1

This seemed to be the afternoon of the 'flying tigers' as both Ross and Bill had their respective fun machines up in the air prior to the meeting.

The first item was previous business and Rod Mill noted that we have to get the appropriate trees for planting due to several constraints associated with height, resistance to dry weather and root structure (read sewer systems). Ross Stenhouse is getting this advice for us.

Gus then gave us a report involving the State Regional Development Director's look over the airfield and its environment from the vantage point of Barry Hempel's Yak 52. Director Steve Moriarty expressed concern that he had not been informed of our multi-million dollar airfield development in the 'region of the lakes'. He indicated that his new-found awareness would generate further meetings and so another meeting occurred at the Ipswich Regional Development Centre where among others, Bob Abnett, Cindy Ford, Steve Moriarty (chair) and our three, Barry, Ian and Gus, were present. Janice has received correspondence as a result of



*Bill's Tiger with Janni aboard*

that meeting which will be tabled at the next M.C. meeting.

Mike and Cheryl then gave a report on new constitution progress. There seemed to be few sticking points once the respective roles of the Board of Management and the Airfield Council were explained. Richard suggested a nominal non-voting membership category. Discussion seemed mixed on this with most at the meeting believing that one universal membership was better. The discussion moved on to the thorny issue of what the membership fee should be. It seems that this matter is due for discussion (again!) at the M.C. meeting.

Glenda Faint indicated that QUA are having a 'Christmas in July Fly In Extravaganza' July 5-6. As QUA need to know how many will be attending, Glenda indicated that the RSVP would need to be no later than July 3. We can now report that our Peter Freeman won the 'poker run' and Christmas in July numbers exceeded Richard and Glenda's expectations by a considerable margin. A great effort by both! (see the website and the next issue for more details).

## Just a reminder

If you have been getting this newsletter and have yet to pay your five dollars to cover costs, you have a choice: pay five dollars to Noelene Mill so she is not subsidising your newsletter or simply advise her that you don't want to receive it.

May all your approaches be straight and your touchdowns smooth.