

AIRPORT MOVEMENTS LEAVE AERO CLUB HOMELESS

THE BIG NEWS SINCE THE LAST BULLETIN IS THE ACTIVITY LARGELY CAUSED BY R&M AIRCRAFT'S DECISION NOT TO FURTHER SUPPORT ORANGE AVIATION.

R&M Aircraft is the company which operates and crews the fire bombers and spotter aircraft on contract to the Rural Fire Service. They bought Orange Aviation two years ago, principally to obtain the buildings and leasehold site.

As a result of that decision, both Orange Aero Engineering and Orange Ultraflight Centre are on notice to vacate the buildings so they can be demolished to make way for a new hangar to house the bomber aircraft.

The flow on effect includes Wade Air's commercial decision to lease their second hangar and the annex (Aero Club) to another business.

What does this mean for the Orange Aero Club?

Basically it means that we are now forced to make some serious decisions about permanent accommodation, and your committee sees this as the top priority at this time. Our first task is to explore funding options to buy/build a facility on the airport, which will be able to generate an income. We will then take a concept plan to the Orange City Council with a view to restoring the grant which had been made available.

All this has to happen soon. We will then go to members at a special meeting to decide on a course of action.

The Aero Club has been content for the past ten years to exist in temporary accommodation, but we now need to "bite the bullet" and develop a permanent place of our own - one in which we can be proud to host functions and grow the club.



2007 AGM at the old temporary Clubhouse

SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 1998, THE AERO CLUB HAS BEEN USING THE ABOVE BUILDING, AND IT HAS SERVED US WELL...

This has been made possible by the generosity and support of Wade Air, and specifically its principal, Wade Mahlo. Members over the years have appreciated this facility, but it is now time to move on.

To Wade, a big "THANK YOU" from the present committee and members of the Orange Aero Club.

The old Club Aircraft, Cessna 172 XP Hawk VH-XPH is just about ready to get airborne again, after its bingle 6 or 7 months ago, and, hey, it looks just like it used to!

The only remaining task is to fit the new wheel fairings, which are just out of the paint shop.

Bob *will* be pleased!

THE 4TH ANNUAL WINGS, WHEELS AND WINE WAS AGAIN AN OUTSTANDING SUCCESS FOR THE MUDGEEO AERO CLUB, DESPITE THE LAST MINUTE WITHDRAWAL OF A COUPLE OF THE MAJOR FLYING ATTRACTIONS.

The district turned on near perfect weather, attracting a good crowd to enjoy the static and flying displays, the vast array of cars and motor bikes and some novelty events such as a tug-o-war between 4WD vehicles and the "accidental" dropping of a Volvo car which was being removed from the airfield where it was "parked illegally".

Some club members and Orange locals attended - Ken flew across in MUB with 3 of our young members, Craig Conlon flew up from Camden in his RV7A, Bob Nash was there as was OUC student pilot Don Maclennan and family.



A fairly rare aircraft on display was a Grumman Avenger - a carrier based fighter/bomber from WW2 arena, which looks pretty ugly on the ground (especially with its wings folded!) but graceful and formidable manoeuvring in the sky. Aerobatic displays were provided by a Pitts Special flown by Paul Bennet, and an Extra 300 flown by Paul Andronicou. The Mudgeeo Model Aero Club was on hand with a static and flying display which looked for all the world like the real thing. Their main attraction (for me) was the RC model F16 jet fighter which reportedly hit 200 kph in flight. It looked and sounded great!

RECREATIONAL AVIATION AUSTRALIA'S ANNUAL FLY-IN AT NARROMINE OVER EASTER WAS PREDICTABLY WET!

Nevertheless, a lot of people and aircraft attended, some flying across the continent from Perth and Darwin, and across the Bass Strait from Tasmania.

It seems that NATFLY as it is known, has morphed to become a Thursday to Sunday event, with a lot of aircraft arriving on Thursday, and the lines pretty much filled up by Friday lunchtime, as the photo shows. Perhaps this is everyone's attempt to get there before the rain!

Exhibitors set up their wares, manufacturers displaying their machines and forums were under way on just about every aspect of flying, maintaining or building aircraft. A couple of first time events was a Womens' Interest tent which was a phenomenal success, and a Young Flyers tent, which had a variable response. The session we did, on Flight Radio, was attended by only 2 kids, and they were a bit young for the prepared material, so we "ad libbed". They enjoyed it and probably learned something!

Worth continuing with next year though.

The National Aerobatics Championships were on at Parkes, and quite a few aircraft and crews attended there late Friday, when caught napping by a storm which rolled in to Narromine from the north-east. Allan Brown was one such pilot - taking a test flight in a Jabiru 230C! He was luckier than some, being with a rated pilot in a VH registered aircraft, they were able to return at night!



The Narromine Aero Club and the Orana Soaring Club, which share the building, did a fantastic job of catering for the mob. Due to the rain most of Saturday, the bar and restaurant facilities did a roaring trade, and the food was excellent.

Our Club was responsible for providing the tent for the Young Flyers' Program, and this was kindly provided by First State Credit Union - the same one we had at the Presentation Night last year. Thanks to Craig and Anthony Cooke (our Mudgeeo members) and Bryan Clements who helped with the putting up and taking down.

Thanks also to Laurie Chapman, who happened by while I was struggling to put the tent up at home to dry it out, before returning it. Laurie's help was MUCH appreciated.

Ken Pidcock

Rumour Follow Up!

Last month we reported on the intention of Brisbane-based Sky Air World to establish a charter operation between Brisbane and Melbourne in an Embraer ERJ-145, stopping at Orange. (Their chief engineer lives here.)

It seems that won't be happening now as the company has gone to the wall and had all their aircraft repo-ed.

And those who were hoping for some competition to Rex's service to Sydney will be disappointed!



People

Steve Ridgewell has now completed his CPL, his Command Instrument Rating and gained a twin engine endorsement on a Piper Seneca, all through Schofields Flying Club at Bankstown.

While he's waiting for the big paying job to come along, he's picked up some instructing work with Sydney Jabiru School at Bankstown.



Late News... Steve has taken up a job offer at Longreach Qld. He'll be doing station work and charter using a Beech Baron and a Bonanza.

Steve leaves Orange on Sat 9th May. Good Luck mate!

Our Junior Members' Training Program has now concluded. Five youngsters more or less completed the program, with Jack Breen, Sam Cook and Mike Langham well under way with flying training.

Welcome to new club member **Bruce Whiley**, who was admitted to membership at the April Committee Meeting.

Bruce is well known to pilot members, especially GA pilots, in his role as the Licenced Aircraft Maintenance Engineer, and owner of Orange Aero Engineering.

Bruce is also a pilot, having recently gained his recreational licence in the Jabiru with Orange Ultraflight Centre. He also holds a GA Student Pilot Licence, and will complete that as soon as a GA school is established here.



Some interesting and challenging events have been going on at the airfield recently.

...from John Pullen.

R&M Aviation advised Graham Barrett his services were no longer required and the same for Leanne. They have decided to cease active operations of Orange Aviation. Graham and Leanne were given short notice to vacate.

It should also be noted that the original OAC clubhouse and adjacent hangar are now occupied by Graham Barrett.

Bruce and Ken were also advised to look for alternate locations as their plans included the demolition of the Orange Aviation maintenance hangar to make way for a brand new complex sufficient to house 4 fire bombers, the C337, possibly another aircraft and the refueling truck.

Both Bruce and Ken are actively seeking out all possible options at present.

To make way for Graham Barrett, the OAC has effectively been evicted from Wade's No 2 hangar building. This, Wade advised was due to the urgency imposed on Graham Barrett to vacate the Orange Aviation building.

Numerous phone calls later some of the clubs assets have been secured in Alan Brown's hangar with some in Gavin Priestley's hangar. Some items remained in the hangar at the rear of the original OAC club building and the committee has drafted a letter acknowledging Wade's past support and noted some items still to be shifted. A working bee was held Saturday 2nd May to tidy this up.

Numerous meetings have been held to investigate and identify future options for the club and as these are fleshed out, there will be further communications to all.

In the meantime and until further notice, the monthly committee meeting will be held in the meeting room in the terminal building. This will continue to be at 1830 hrs on the second Tuesday of each month.

For all pilots...

While there continues to be a steady flow of ultra light pilots training and/or taking part in a comp sequence, the same cannot be said for GA pilots. Because there is no training of GA pilots in Orange and those who are current, are busy with their own lives, it has been decided not to continue with the GA division of the club comps this year. Instead there will be local flights or short distance flights to co-incide with when Orange Ultraflight conducts their comps. It is hoped that pilots will communicate their intentions and that anyone interested will join in and 'go along for a flight' on the day.

Any GA pilots wishing to arrange a BFR are welcome to contact a committee member as we can arrange this as required.

In summary, while things are in a state of flux owing to all the movements on the airfield, please feel free to contact any of the committee if you would like more information as it becomes available or to advise of your intentions if you are planning a flight somewhere.

The aero club is definitely not dead and the committee is exploring all available options. The Friday night BBQ will continue at the orange Ultraflight facility for the time being and all are welcome.