

# Orange Aero Club



Newsletter - July/August 1999

## 14th Suncoast Air Race



*Some of the race aircraft at South Grafton*

**O**range Aero Club was represented in this annual event by the President Bob Nash, and members Phil Bryon and Ken Pidcock. It was originally planned to fly FYL, but the booking was mislaid and Bob was able to hire Archer FZF from Forbes.

All up, there were some 19 hours tacho time flown, and FZF proved to be a great aircraft for the travel involved. A high wing would be a definite advantage for the observation component of the race, though.

The race was really a navigation/observation rally, and the time component was determined by the crews nominating a time for each leg based on the aircraft TAS, and trying to be right on time at each check-point.



Grafton Aero Club played host to the crews of 29 aircraft on the day before and the start of the race, and provided BBQ dinner, brekka and the club facilities almost in the heart of South Grafton, at their airstrip. The route took us via several dots on the chart and 20 or so observation questions with doubtful answers to Dalby for lunch and refuelling, then via Kingaroy and a whole lot more dots and questions to the last point near Maroochydore - about four & a half hours flying

on the day. The last check point before Maroochy was an airstrip in the middle of a lake!!!

Maroochy Aero Club provided the venue and food for the overnight stay, but they couldn't keep the weather from closing in on us and delaying the start by three hours next day. We did get away about midday, though, but our performance fell far short of the first day's. I guess they made it harder on the second day!

The presentation dinner on Saturday night was a great success, and a lot of prizes were passed out to winners in various categories. The event was taken out by a three man crew from Qantas, with around 50,000 hours command time between them, none of which would have been of much help flying a C172 near the ground!

Congratulations to the organisers, host clubs and fellow participants. It was a lot of fun and we'll be back again

*Continued Page Three*

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## BIG BOYS' TOYS

### The PZL-104 Wilga 80

It's been called mosquito, preying mantis, ugly @\*!!^#%, and lots of other things, but when Charles Thompson's Wilga appeared a couple months ago, it certainly didn't go un-noticed!

The arrival in Orange from its previous location at Pinaroo in SA was achieved despite the loss of all charts when someone opened a door in flight, and despite an urgent need to visit a friendly farmer at Forest Reefs on the way!

This particular unit, VH-PSZ, is one of only four Wilga 80's in Australia, the others being PZZ at Camden, PZQ in WA and one at Mareeba in the Atherton Tablelands area of Queensland. There was a fifth, but it died along the way, or went overseas... Four units were originally imported by Jim Fenton (Ausflight - Boonah) who subsequently sold them to develop the strut-braced Drifter. (The Mareeba aircraft was a later import.) PSZ was sold to John Thompson of Orange (no relation to Charles) who later became involved in the Eucalyptus oil business and moved to Condobolin. John later moved to Pinaroo, and recently decided to sell due to health considerations.



hostilities started, and worked for De havilland in the USA. He then moved to De Havilland Canada, where he developed the DHC-1 Chipmunk featured in the last newsletter.

PZL are still producing aircraft, and as well as their own marques produce, among others, YAKS, Trinidad & Tobago and Zlins under licence.

For the techno-heads, the Wilga 80 is powered by a 260 HP PZL air-start radial engine based on a Pratt & Whitney design, cruises at around 85 kts with a 925 fpm climb rate at gross of 2886 lbs. It carries 44 gallons (US??) of fuel and runs nicely on farm fuel from a jerry can at Forest Reefs.

Ceiling is 12000 ft and it takes 365 ft of ground roll or 800 ft to get it over a 50 ft obstacle. Stall speed clean is around 50 kts and 35 kts dirty.

When asked why he bought such an unusual aircraft, Charles' reply was "Because its not another bloody Cessna!"

### Charles Thompson



Charles started flying around 10 years ago in Dubbo in GA aircraft, then later moved to the Peak Hill area where he met Wade Mahlo and became involved in ultralights. He bought a Thruster, then later sold that in favour of a Skydart (bad move), then took up GA flying again when he moved to Orange about three

years ago.

Charles holds a PPL and is currently working at a controlled airspace endorsement. He's completed his CPL theory exam, and faces up for the IREX soon. When he's not flying, Charles and wife Sue run RMC Lattice Works in Orange.

The Wilga 80 was developed by PZL in Poland principally as a military reconnaissance/scout aircraft and could be described as the Eastern Bloc equivalent of the Cessna L19 Bird Dog. It's seen service as an air ambulance and in border patrol work, and is popular in Canada where they're often fitted with skis or floats. In Europe, the Wilga is used to tow up to 3 one man PARAT gliders at the one time!

PZL started in Poland in the 1920's, and was taken over by the government in the lead up to WW 2. Interestingly, it's chief engineer got out of Poland before the

*Don't forget the Annual  
Christmas Dinner and  
Presentation Night at the  
Patmos, Orange on Satur-  
day 6 November!*

## 14th Suncoast Air Race

*Continued from Page One*

to see if we can improve on our 16th placing!

The trip back was planned coastal to Gosford, then through to Lithgow and Orange, but we turned inland at Taree as a best chance of getting over the hills to home. This was not to be though, and

·after a pleasant low-level flight along the inland light aircraft lane past Williamstown military airspace, we ended up at Cessnock for the night.

Cessnock is a thriving skydiving centre, and we watched the last jumps of the day and talked to the three girls on crutches! Ski-ing accident they said!

Next day, a late start due to some minor but persistent engine problems, tracked straight over the tiger country to Bathurst below the cloud (pretty rough) then snuck into Orange between rain cells and bunches of cloud on ground to arrive just before the weather really closed in.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**T**he AGM held on Wednesday 11 August was well attended by members, and as well as the business of the meeting, we were privileged to have as guests Rob Glenn, CFI of Parkes, and Steve Smith of the Rural Fire Fighting Service, and Dave Shearing from Orange City Council, chairman of the Airport Advisory Committee.

Retiring President Bob Nash gave a brief overview of the highlights of our first year of operation, and foreshadowed the continuing steady growth of recreational aviation in the area, and the involvement of Orange Aero Club. Bob cited the contact and involvement with other clubs, the social and competition days, involvement in NSW Interclub Comps and the 14th Sunshine State Air race as indicative of the health of the club. Bob also paid tribute to the tremendous support of Wade and Brett Mahlo, and to our instructor Daniel de Vries who has actively been conducting flight and theory training.

Bob handed the meeting over to Clr Dave Shearing to conduct the election of office bearers, which resulted in the following committee for 1999/2000:

President:	Bob Nash
Vice President:	Robert Alford
Secretary:	Peter Grey
Treasurer:	Philip Bryon
Asst Treasurer:	John Ellis
House Officer:	Charles Thompson
Aircraft Officer:	Ken Pidcock
Competition Officer:	Ross McLennan
Membership:	Stuart Porges
Committee Members:	John Sainsbury, Philip Martin, Daniel de Vries
Public Officer:	Peter Grey

**R**ob Glen addressed the meeting, providing an insight into what he believes makes a successful Aero Club. Rob has been involved with many aero clubs since learning to fly in Condobolin in 1968, and indeed has been invaluable to our club in providing assistance to Daniel and in meeting the legal requirements to allow us to carry out flight training.

Rob included the following thoughts as typical objectives for an aero club.

- \*A need for airport or airstrip, with clubhouse facilities as a centre for the social aspects and flight planning facility.

- \*An aircraft available to members at reasonable rates

- \*Interaction with other clubs, both local and remote

- \*Training facility as a means of attracting new members and assisting existing members to upgrad skills, achieve ratings or endorsements

- \*Working bees to provide cohesion and to allow members to utilise skills in support of the club

- \*Publicity to keep club activities in the public eye, and ensure the Aero Club is an integral part of the community

- \*To be a political group, to help ensure that Council gives due consideration to airport and aviation in its deliberations.

**S**teve Smith spoke on the changing nature of firefighting, and the increasing reliance on air support in fighting fires effectively. He gave advance notice of a training program for volunteers based in Orange. This would require 30 to 40 volunteers to be trained in both aerial and ground operations, and commended this activity as a practical way in which aero club members could assist their community in a relevant way. Further enquiries can be directed through Vice President Robert Alford.

## Competitions

**O**ur competition organiser, Ross, reports keen competition between a small number of regular fliers at the last club day on 15 August. This was a practice day, and the theme was "Spot Landings". The comp consisted of a blind standard circuit with a glide approach & spot landing, a 500 ft cct & spot, then another standard circuit and spot. The result was Charles Thompson - 1st, John Gordon - 2nd, Ross McLennan - 3rd, Robert Alford - 4th and Phil Bryon - 5th.

It was also great to have John Ellis in the Chippy there, and Gerald Ingham in TWO aircraft! He flew in first in the Ag Waggon, then went home and swapped for the 180. The weather on the day was perfect, and I missed it all to run an Orienteering Competition!

Many Orange members are also Bathurst Club members, and a few regularly contest the Bathurst club comps. The comp on 22 August was a little unusual in that there were a number of events nominated beforehand, but no sequence! Consequently a lot of pilots "died" in the glide approach when they were too wide

to get back to the runway against the strong wind. Results at Bathurst were very close, with John Bestwick jnr 1st - a half point clear of Ross McLennan in 2nd, with Phil Bryon a further half point away in third! Kingsley Picker was 4th, Charlie Camilleri was 5th and Charles Thompson 6th.

This was a great result, and points up the value of regular practice. There were 25 starters in Bathurst's comp - wouldn't it be great if we could achieve those numbers!

The next Orange club day will be a navigation trial lasting about 30 minutes (unless you get lost, of course!). Note the changed date - 19 September - and please bookings are essential for this one. Other clubs have been invited, you'll need a Canberra or Sydney WAC and ERSA and at least one observer. Please consider taking someone along for a ride if there's an empty seat. Plan to arrive about an hour before time (or 3 hours if your name's Phil Bryon) to allow for flight planning.

### *Sometimes the best lookers demand some extra care and attention!*

*On the Maroochydore Air Race trip, Archer FZF fouled plugs on seven separate occasions. Twice the crew had to return from the run-up to remove and clear plugs. Once a plug with a cracked porcelain had to be replaced. Engineer assistance was necessary at Dalby, Maroochydore and Cessnock!*



## Notes from the President

**I**t is heartening to see that 32 members have renewed their membership or joined up for the second year of the club, but we must continue to strive to build this even further. We will be actively recruiting members, including student and social members this year.

If we compare our situation with other clubs, many of which have been operating for a long time, I believe we have good reason to feel proud of our achievements to date. It was great to talk with members of different clubs from NSW and Qld on our recent trip to Maroochydore, and to find that we are well known in the aero club community, and our progress is being followed with great interest.

We will continue to develop a close alliance with other aero clubs in this part of the country, and hope to enjoy many combined activities over the coming years.

There has been a marked increase in light aircraft

traffic at Orange, and this is partly due to the widely publicised activities of this club. Daniel's efforts on the training scene, under the guidance of Rob Glen, have helped to get more people interested in flying, and this in turn will tend to bring even more interest.



Our club aircraft has provided us with some additional expense recently, but should now be able to serve us well for several years. The second coms radio will be installed on 1 September, and a repaint and interior refurbishment will follow as soon as possible. There is also the possibility of a rego change, and this end VH-ORG has been reserved for a 12 month period. We do need to increase the utilisation of the aircraft however!

Congratulations to Charles on the purchase of the PZL Wilga - its great to see additional and unusual aircraft join "our" fleet!

## Interesting Websites

In this regular feature, we'll put you in touch with one or two websites which you will hopefully find interesting and informative.

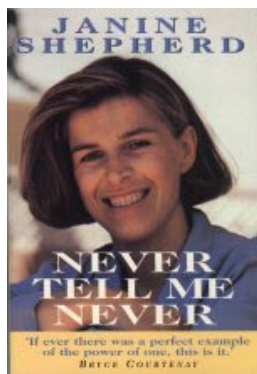
This issue's link gives an insight into the extraordinary story of Janine Shepherd - a world class athlete and ski champion who's life was altered forever when she was hit by a truck in the Blue Mountains west of Sydney whilst on a training cycle ride.

To even survive the terrible injuries she suffered required a level of determination and commitment most of us couldn't even imagine, but Janine overcame all the odds and eventually learned to fly and became a living legend.

Janine has written several books, and her story has been made into a TV movie which is available on video. She is now in great demand as an inspirational speaker, both in Australia and overseas.

Check out the website at <[www.janineshepherd.com](http://www.janineshepherd.com)>, buy the books and video - it may just be a really valuable experience.

There's even a possibility that Orange Aero Club may be able to engage Janine to speak at our end of year function!



## Meet Ross McLennan

Ross is the guy who puts all the effort into making sure our club competitions go off as smoothly as possible.

Competitions are an invaluable way of sharpening skills under the guidance of an instructor, and of practising those skills such as glide approach and landing, which may one day save your life! I can say from first hand experience that the silence is truly deafening when the fan stops unexpectedly!

Ross's self imposed task is made much easier if people take the trouble to make a firm booking, and this is especially important as numbers grow and we need to arrange a second aircraft. The next comp is a navigation exercise, and bookings for this are essential!



Having said all that about the value of the comps as a learning tool, don't imagine they're not fun! After all, most of us are recreational pilots whose main objective is to enjoy the tremendous feeling of being "up there". Next comp, plan on spending the day, having a barbecue and maybe taking some friends or student members for a ride too.

## Training

Training continues to be fundamental to the success of Orange Aero Club, and Daniel has completed some 32 hours of dual instruction so far, as well as conducting a combined PPL/CPL theory course, and theory training for nine would-be instrument fliers. Peter Grey sat the IREX on 23 August, but due to a glitch in Australia Post, applications for several others didn't reach CASA in time.

Daniel recently went for an interview for flight crew training with the RAAF - a 3 day job with all sorts of meaningful tests - and came through with flying colours. He has a further assessment in practical flying skills at Tamworth coming up soon, before he will know if he'll be accepted, but the feeling is we'll be looking for a replacement instructor soon!

We'll miss being able to give Daniel a hard time during lectures, but realise that his country needs him more!

One of Daniel's students is Phil (New Chum Jack) Bryon, who's currently doing his cross country training. Phil did all the flight planning for the recent trip to Maroochydore, (a generous gesture on the part of the rest of the crew!) and will become our in house expert on all flight procedures!



## Search & Rescue

Orange Airport has a new second hand fire tender, which should prove to be a big improvement over the old unit. The last club day at the airport we did have four members of the Springhill Bush Fire Unit to show us some of the finer points of the truck. I would hope that we could have some training on the airport unit at the next club day in September 99.

Application forms are available from Robert Alford for the Cabonne RFS support unit. Members who have indicated their willingness to support Cabonne re aviation should complete a rego form.



The business end of the new Orange Airport fire unit.

## Bits 'n Pieces



*At 200 kts cruise, this Lancair 320 was the fastest competitor in the 14th Suncoast Air Race*

The following article is taken from Bathurst Aero Club's "The Wind Bag", who pinched it from Coffs Harbour Aero Club's Newsletter, who got it from...

### THE JOYS OF GETTING OLD

You know you're getting old when:

Everything hurts. What doesn't hurt doesn't work.

The gleam in your eyes is the sunshine on your bifocals.

You feel like the morning after, but haven't been anywhere.

Your children begin to look middle aged.

You join a health club, but don't go.

You have all the answers, but nobody asks the questions.

You look forward to a dull evening.

You need glasses to find your glasses.

You turn out the light for economy instead of romance.

You're in a rocking chair, but can't make it go.

Your knees buckle, but your belt won't.

Your back goes out more than you do.

Your house is too big, your medicine box isn't big enough.

You sink your teeth into a steak and they stay there.

Your birthday cake collapses from the weight of all the candles.

**Are these your thoughts?**

### Club Aircraft. VH-ARK

Utilisation of the club aircraft has been well down over the last month or so, and hopefully this will pick up with the coming of spring. We need to average 20 hours usage per month just to meet payments and to sock a bit away for unexpected expenses.

One of the penalties of owning an old aircraft is that there is an increased potential on failure of some ancillary equipment - the aircraft still flies fine, but its usefulness becomes compromised.

For instance, last month the plane was on a navex into Canberra when the pilot was told by ATC that the transponder wasn't sending any altitude information. Also the ADF indicator decided not to work, so there's now no servicable nav instrument.

ARK is booked into Arnie's at Narromine to have these repairs carried out on Wednesday, 1 September, and while there we'll take the opportunity of having the second com radio installed. This will give us a primary radio with a flip-flop frequency selector, and the existing one as a backup.

The committee will shortly be looking at a repaint job, and one of the things to be considered is the selling of some advertising, similar to Coffs Harbour Aero Club's 172 in the photo below. We'd like to hear from anyone who might be interested in this sort of sponsorship.



### Other Advertising??

Your committee would also like to hear from any businesses about advertising in this newsletter. The distribution at present is to all members and clubs in the area, as well as clubs or organisations with some special affinity to ours. It's also downloadable from the OAC website, <http://users.netwit.net.au>

With a small number of paid ads, raising say \$100 per issue, we could improve the print quality and buy a higher profile website, and the potential distribution would be enormous!

The Orange Aero Club Newsletter is produced six times a year in February, April, June, August, October and December, and is sent via email to those members and other clubs who have requested it. The email version is in Portable Document Format and requires Adobe Acrobat Reader, available free from the website!

Contributions are welcomed, and if possible should be prepared in plain text (\*.txt) format and emailed to the editor, or sent on IBM formatted floppy disk. Typed or handwritten copy is still welcome, as are good photos suitable for scanning. Deadline for next issue is Sunday 18 October.

Website- <http://users.netwit.net.au/~pidcock>

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