

# Fly About

Northam Aero club (Inc.) Newsletter

Vol. 53 Issue No.6 JUNE 2022



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# Presidents Message

Hi all, welcome to my report for June 2022. The weather has not been the best for flying but I am sure the farmers will not be complaining.

I flew back from Bunbury a few weeks ago and could not believe the smoke from the burn off fires below. I flew through the first one but the second smoke cloud looked too thick so had to divert around it.

The article from Kevin Lathbury is a great read in this edition and it shows us how lucky we are to have Kevin Lathbury as an Instructor and MJ as our Editor, well done guys.

Our Annual General Meeting is being held Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> July at 7.30pm at the Club rooms in Withers Street, Northam. Being a Saturday night the bar will be open and if you could bring along a plate of food to share at the end of the meeting it would be appreciated by all.

Kevin has been kept busy Instructing and has advised the Committee that the club does need to locate a second instructor. If anyone would like to instruct or know any Instructors that would like to fill the position please contact me or the Committee.

Thanks must go to Denis Beresford for making the cabinet to store bits and pieces alongside the new light system in the Club Room.

Liz Ellis is running the bar on Saturday nights but numbers are down and as Liz comes all the way from Wyalkatchem the Committee may review the opening hours.

The Nationals and World Women's Ballooning competitions are still happening and will advise you of dates in next month's Fly About.

I would like to sincerely thank all the Committee for all their time they give as volunteers to make the Aero Club a success. I would also thank our Editor, Martin he continues to do a fantastic job every year.

Please note due to rising fuel costs the aircraft hire rate has increased.

Remember more than ever use your carby heat.

Cheers, Errol

# Club Captains Report

Our June Flying Comp at Northam was Circuits x 4.

Low cloud made it interesting, we started early to beat the arrival of a cold front and completed the Comp by 10 a.m.

Ian Berry joined us at Northam in a modified Comp .

## RESULTS

Placing	Pilot	Aircraft
First Place	James Hill	C152
Second Place	Peter Hill Jr.	C152
Third Place	Nick Kostov	J160
Fourth Place	Ian Berry	C172
Fifth Place	Peter Hill Snr.	C152

**Judges James and Nick ....most appreciated!**

James played back slow motion film of all landings, this is a great addition to our TEAM NAC FLYING COMPS , adds another layer of enjoyment for each pilot, most entertaining and great transparency to the judging process as each Pilot can see his score is correct as well as maybe learn from a different angle.

James sends each Pilot an emailed photo/video of his landings also!

Thank You to our Judges, you are pivotal to the smooth running and success of NAC Flying Comps here at Northam.

This June Comp is the Final Comp Season 2021/2022, I would like to Sincerely thank all 11 Pilots flying 8 different aircraft for their enthusiasm and good company this season and look forward to serving you all again as Club Captain season July 2022 to June 2023, (unless I can convince Dave McFarlane to do a term as Club Captain).

I have performed Club Captain role for 8 years now, which makes me the longest serving Club Captain at NAC.

I invite Dave McFarlane to take a turn at the wheel.....

# Next Club Competition

First Club Competition for the new season is Sunday 10th July 2022...

## "CALJIE FARM RECON"

A low level mini Cross Country with a straight in approach etc.

Please see attached full Comp Sheet and Map.

Hope to see all TEAM NAC PILOTS at Northam Sunday 10th July  
for the first Comp of the new season!

Until then, Stay Safe

Cheers, Peter Hill 0450415947 [prh@aurora.net.au](mailto:prh@aurora.net.au)

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## NEW CLUB CHAMPION

## ANNOUNCEMENT

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEW CLUB CHAMPION

2021/2022

***NICK KOSTOV***

RUNNER UP: ***JAMES HILL,***

THIRD: ***IAN BERRY***

Nick Kostov secures the  
NAC Club Championship  
with this landing, well  
done Nick!

Keep an eye out for the  
next edition of the Fly  
About for pictures and  
the full story on the  
presentation of trophies.





# Next Club Competition

Here is next Flying Comp  
 Sunday *10<sup>th</sup> July*  
 Enjoy Peter Hill Club Captain



## CALIE FARM RECON

A Mini Air Trial within 15 mile radius YNTM.

PILOT: \_\_\_\_\_

CALL SIGN \_\_\_\_\_

Rwy 32: Depart Downwind @ 1,500 Ft tracking 125 degrees.

Radio 124.2	"Northam Traffic _____ Departing Downwind Maintaining 1,500 Ft. Tracking 125 degrees Northam"	10
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At 14 Miles outbound:

Find TRIANGLE just North of Quellington Road:

REPORT: is there a WINDSOCK in triangle? Yes / No \_\_\_\_\_ 10

At Corner of CALIE Rd and Quellington Rd:

REPORT: How many separate Paddocks ----- 6 or 8? \_\_\_\_\_ 10

## RETURN TO BASE

Clearoffs. TRACK 285\* CLIMB to 2,600 Ft.

At 10 Miles Inbound:

Radio 124.2	"Northam Traffic _____ 10 Miles South East INBOUND @ 2,600 Ft. Estimate Time _____ Northam"	10
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At CARTER Rd: approx... 1 mile on the nose :

Locate ===== Bqramin Road:

TRACK 320\* and Align visually with Rwy 32 Northam.

Radio 124.2	"Northam Traffic _____ 5 Miles South East @ 2,600 Ft. STRAIGHT IN APPROACH Runway 32 Estimate Circuit Time _____ Northam"	10
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Radio 124.2	"Northam Traffic _____ ESTABLISHED 3 MILE FINAL STRAIGHT IN APPROACH Runway 32 Northam"	10
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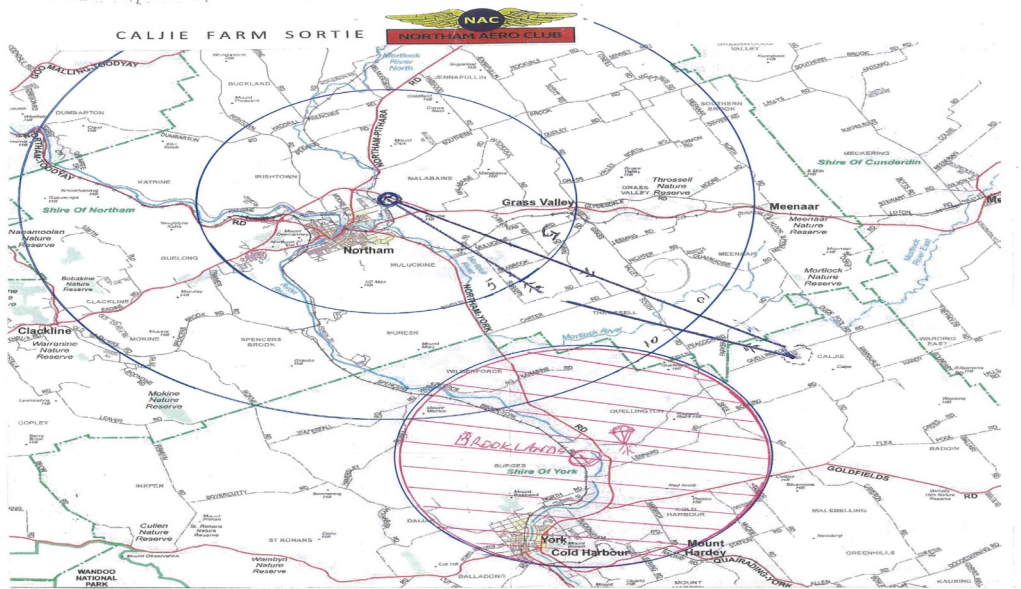
Radio 124.2	"Northam Traffic _____ ONE MILE FINAL STRAIGHT IN RUNWAY 32 FULL STOP Northam"	10
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BONUS POINTS:

Landing 10

Radio 124.2	"Northam Traffic _____ LANDED and CLEAR Runway 32 Northam"	10
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# Next Club Competition



C	L	E	A	R	O	F	F
Compass	Log	Engine	Altitude	Radio	Orientation	Fuel	Forced Landing
Compass & DG Aligned?	10 min Marks? ETA Logged? ATD Logged?	Lean Mixture? RPM? Temps & Pressures?	Hemisph? Assigned? Limitations (eg. Cloud, Terrain, etc)	Correct Freq? Transponder? Nav aids Usable? Radio Calls?	Where am I? Fix/Pinpoint if possible!	Contents? Log!	Where to go? Wind direction? Ground Elevation?

**The Next Club Competition is the first Club Competition**

**for the new season and is to be held on:**

**Sunday 10th July 2022**

**See above for details of the:**

**"CALJIE FARM RECON"**

**See you all there, Peter Hill Club Captain.**

# **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Notice is hereby given to the  
Members of:**

**The Annual General Meeting for:**

**NORTHAM AERO CLUB**

**Saturday 9th July 2022**

**NAC Club Rooms**

**7.30pm**

## **AGENDA ITEMS**

**Election of Office Bearers**

**Notices of Motion**

**(Please bring a small plate of food for fellowship at the conclusion of the meeting)**

The names of the candidates proposed as Officers of the Club with the names of their proposers and seconders shall be in the hands of the Secretary 21 days before the date of the Annual Meeting (18<sup>th</sup> June 2022). The names shall be posted in the Club for 14 days before the Annual General Meeting.

# CLUB ELECTIONS

## **Nomination Form**

Nomination is hereby made for the  
positions of:

\*President \*Vice President \*Secretary  
\*Treasurer

\*3 x Committee Persons (2 year)

Nominee \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Proposer: \_\_\_\_\_

Seconder: \_\_\_\_\_

**\*To be in the hands of the Secretary by Saturday 18<sup>th</sup>  
June 2022**

(PO Box 247 Northam WA 6401)

## Runway 14, wind 220°/25G35....

Depending on how you look at it, learning to fly at an airfield with four runways, or more correctly, four pairs of parallel runways, was a good or a bad thing. RAAF Base Point Cook back in the 80's had two sealed runways (17/35 and 04/22), and it also had two grass runways (08/26 and 13/31 if I remember rightly). The way you stayed on centreline on those runways was to aim at the big red and white checkered sightboards at the end. These sightboards presented a couple of disadvantages to budding military aviators, one being that they served as a target for the dreaded "sightboard run", a common event whereby your instructor didn't want to fail you for a flight but wanted to punish you for some misdemeanour. Keep your helmet and parachute on, and off you go to the sightboard. Extra unwanted fitness training.

The other disadvantage of this runway setup was that Tower switched runways whenever there was any noticeable crosswind, so in our basic training we never really learnt to deal with crosswind landings.

Northam of course presents no such limitation on your training. If you want to deal with a windsock on Viagra at 90 degrees to the runway, swirling, constantly changing, gusty conditions, wind shear and sink on finals, we have an airfield free of landing charges just for you.

If you're dealing with a typical Northam crosswind, remember it affects all legs of the circuit. If there's a good westerly component and you're not on the ball, you'll be out to your downwind spacing before you know it. On downwind you need to allow for it so your spacing doesn't go astray.

With a tailwind on base, you need to get the aeroplane set up early because you're going to get the base leg done pretty quickly. This may mean slowing down on late downwind and reducing power before you turn, and you'll also need less power across base so you can lose 500 feet quickly. Also, you want to start your finals turn a bit earlier than normal, so you don't overshoot and have a big S-turn onto final, which for a good pilot means a go-round. And conversely, with a headwind on base, you may decide to complete the turn before reducing power and doing the "lose speed not height" thing, and you may have a bit more power to get to finals. Also, if the conditions are gusty, be Irish and "be sure to be sure" that your speed is comfortably in the white arc before using flaps.

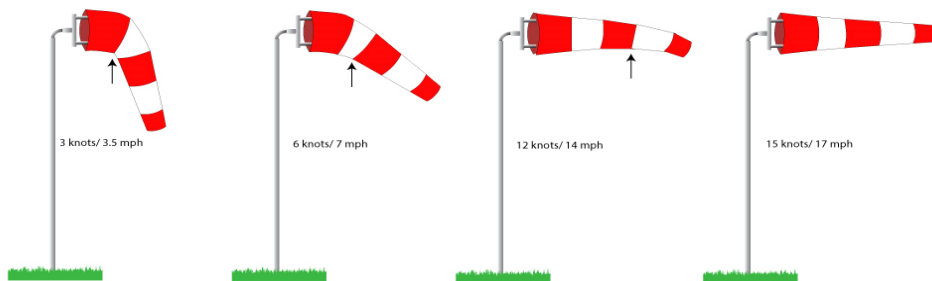
On finals, you get a good look at the wind direction because you're pointing the nose into it. (Okay, sideslipping all the way down finals is an option, but it's not very comfortable for passengers, so let's stick with what most people do.) If it's from the left, you'll need right rudder in the flare to point the nose down the runway and avoid bending the struts. In some light aircraft this is quite easy to manage, but an aeroplane like a 172 is very directionally stable. That's good because it means it's easy to hold a heading, which is a good thing for a training and touring aeroplane, but it also means it's very resistant to yaw. In a strong crosswind it takes a real bootful of rudder to straighten it. I don't know how many times I've said "more rudder" when a student has been applying a good bootful and thinking "That must be enough", but the nose still isn't quite straight.

There are a couple of ways to tell if you don't have enough quite enough rudder. The more obvious one is that the nose isn't pointing straight down the centreline, and another sign is that as you touch down the aeroplane's inertia will straighten it out and you'll feel a little bit of a yaw.

With any significant crosswind, as soon as you straighten up, the wind will try and push you off the centreline, so you need aileron into wind. And of course, from your very first flying lesson you know the secondary effect of aileron is yaw in the same direction, meaning opposite to the way you're trying to yaw, so any significant aileron input means even more rudder to counter it.

So remember – rudder to straighten the nose, aileron to stop the drift, and don't be scared to use the pedals – they're not footrests!

Happy flying, and if you can find one of those nice clear still winter days, get out and enjoy some flying. But if the wind looks like it's beyond you, admit your limitations – no shame in that – and go and see a movie instead. There's a cracker of a flying one out at the moment!



# Wylie Wheels & Art

**\$20**

Registration includes:  
Saturday Evening Arts viewing &  
Burger from the Wylie Men's Shed &  
Sat or Sun entry into the  
CBH Agricultural Museum

*Bring your  
Planes,  
Cars  
& Bikes*

To Wyalkatchem:

Show & Shine in the main street for cars & Bikes

Wildflower Tours operating ALL weekend

Visit other Points Of Interest\*

**17 to 18  
September**

**Full Welcome Saturday with  
Show & Shine Sunday**

Art Expo 16-19 Sept

Wildflowers

Painting classes

Metal Pouring

Wylie Museum

Kids Events

Food & Market stalls



Sneak peek at Wylie Museum



Wyalkatchem Sunday Arts Group

Presented in conjunction with the 2022 Wylie Arts Expo



# Wylie Wheels & Art Weekend Extravaganza



Arts & Crafts Expo

16 to 19 September 2022  
Wyalkatchem Town Hall

## Calling all artists

Expo open to ALL  
West Australian  
Artists to exhibit FREE:

## Perth Based Artists:

Artworks can again be dropped off at  
**Jacksons Drawing Supplies**  
**Balcatta store**  
on a date TBC and will be returned to  
the store at the end of the Expo.

**Sat to Mon 17-19 Expo**  
**open 9:30am –5pm**

Members of the WSAG will be in attendance  
and completing artworks -

Other visiting artists are free to join them  
with free use of acrylic paints and brushes

\*canvases available at cost price

Morning and afternoon tea will be available  
for a small fee.

Other events on weekend include

Indigenous Art Workshop  
Lost Wax Sculpture Workshop  
Bus trips to Wild Flower Reserves  
Indigenous guide in flower and bush tucker  
recognition.

Artists entry forms including conditions are available at  
[www.wyalkatchemcrc.com](http://www.wyalkatchemcrc.com)

at the Wyalkatchem CRC or Call 08 9681 1500  
Lot 5700, Railway Terrace, Wyalkatchem

**16 to 19  
September  
2022**

**Gold  
Coin  
Donation  
To View  
Artworks**



## Vehicle Competition

17-18 September 2022

Railway Terrace Wyalkatchem

Full Welcome Saturday with  
Show & Shine Sunday

Show & Shine in the main street for  
Cars & Bikes

Guided Wildflower Tours operating  
ALL weekend

Visit other Points Of Interest including:

**Art Expo 16-19 Sept**

**Wildflowers  
Museum**

**Kids Events**

**Face Painting**

**Magician**

**Market stalls**

**\$20**

Registration for Show & Shine includes:

Saturday Evening Arts viewing &

Country Style Burger plus  
weekend entry into the

**CBH Agricultural Museum**





It all began in 1989 when my friend John Markham was flying his newly purchased Piper Chieftain from USA to Australia. He decided to take the long way home via the northern route rather than just fly across the Pacific Ocean. Over India he had an engine failure and was forced to land at a remote Indian Airfield. He was arrested for landing without permission.

It took a while to organise repairs for the Chieftain engine and while filling in time at this airfield he came across some old aircraft, in pieces, in an old hangar. His main interest was in two Tiger Moths, which he was able to purchase. Buying them was one thing, but getting them out of the country was another thing.

After a lot of “red tape” and five more trips back to India, John was finally able in 1994 to get the Tiger Moths into a sea container and out of India to Australia. At the last minute the “sellers” decided to include a Stinson L5B aircraft as well. It was also in a wrecked condition and came with a lot of loose components.

Once in Perth all these bits and pieces were unloaded into John’s hangar at Jandakot Airport, and an arduous task began sorting Tiger Moth components from Stinson components.

That’s where I became involved. I was in-between jobs at the time and John knew I could do with some money and also knew of my aviation engineering experience and so employed me to sort out the Stinson bits and place them into another container ready to ship to Coolangatta.

I spent a month working out at the hangar identifying, recording serial numbers, and packing the various instruments and components. I bubble wrapped everything and then crated it all up and secured the items into the sea container.

It was going to Coolangatta Airport because Malcolm Long (owner of Air Gold Coast) was an expert in restoring the Stinson L5 as he had already restored a few. There are six Stinson L5s on the Australian Aircraft Register today and I think Malcolm has restored them all.

It took just over a year for John’s Stinson to be fully restored to US Army / Airforce specifications including original colours and markings. It was then put on the Australian register as VH-PWZ.

This aircraft originally saw active service in India, and in case you are not familiar with the Stinson L5B, it was designed as an aerial ambulance. One pilot seat and a stretcher compartment behind. When not used as an ambulance, the floor immediately behind the pilot’s seat could hinge up to reveal a small “dicky” seat that could be used by a passenger or second pilot. A second joy stick could be installed and all other controls, except the flap lever, were duplicated for this position.

After active service with the US Air Force, 2<sup>nd</sup> Air Commando Group in the Burma / India Campaign during WW2, the aircraft was used as a training aircraft for the Nagpur Aero Club. During this time its Indian registration letters were CRO. At the time of its Australian registration the letters CRO were not available as they were used for an aircraft owned by the Crown Casino in Melbourne. The casino later sold this aircraft to an overseas buyer and so the registration became available and John's Stinson was transferred to VH-CRO.

John left VH-CRO at Coolangatta for several years and he would periodically visit Coolangatta from Perth to fly the Stinson. He became a regular participator in the ANZAC Day events doing formation flights with other Stinson aircraft over the dawn services and mid morning events. He would also fly in the Remembrance Day events each year. It was after such an event in November 2000 that I flew to Coolangatta to join John and we flew VH-CRO up the beautiful Queensland Gold Coast and the islands off Brisbane. We landed at Caboolture to refuel and enjoyed a lovely lunch at the local Aero Club. We then returned south to Coolangatta. It was at this time that I decided I was in love with this aircraft and suggested to John that if he ever decided to fly his Stinson home to Perth, then I wanted to be the one to assist him do this trip.

## Flying up Queensland's Gold Coast



# The Stinson Story

Philip Smith

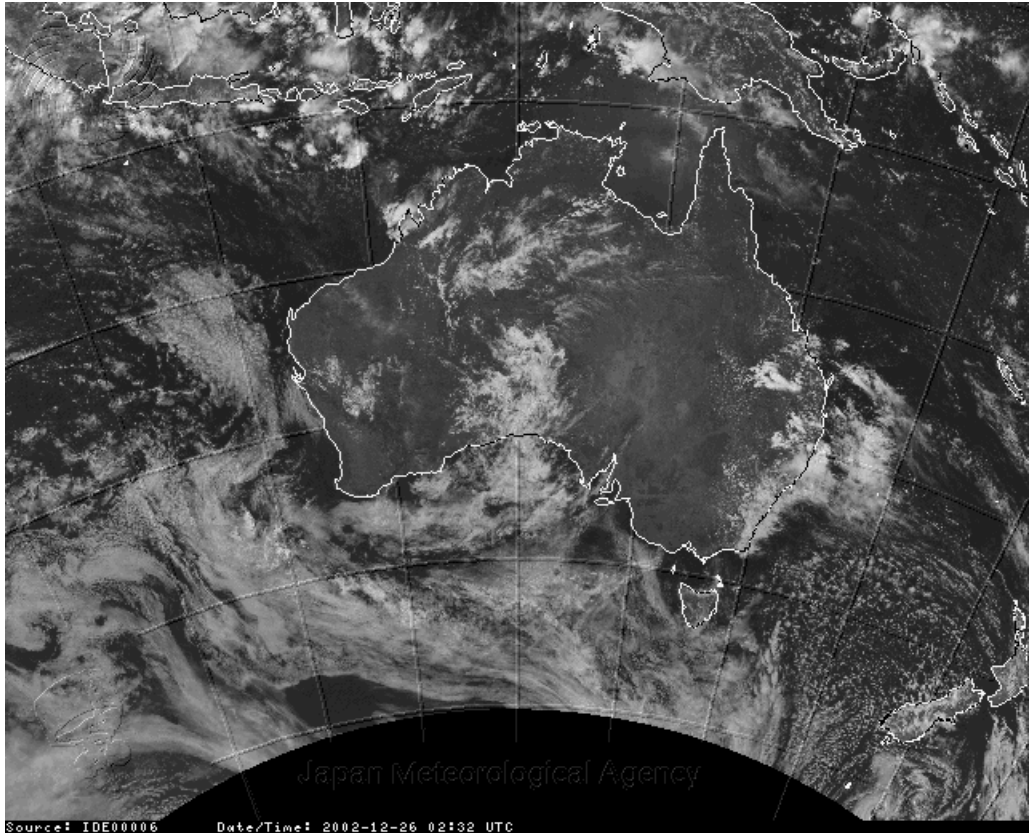
This brings us to Christmas Day 2002 when the great across Australia trek was to be attempted. I flew out on a Qantas flight Perth to Coolangatta on Christmas Day and John did the same the next day. I spent Boxing Day organising the Stinson for a departure as soon as John could join me.

The weather was terrible from the minute I arrived in Coolangatta and stayed that way until our departure on the 27<sup>th</sup> December 2002. There were menacing thunderstorms and rain and plenty of low cloud down on the mountaintops all to the west of Coolangatta. We had to find a way over those mountains in order to start our trek home to Perth.



VH-CRO ready for departure at Coolangatta Airport





### Satellite Image of the cloud on the day before our departure from Coolangatta

Remember that although both John and I are Instrument Rated Pilots, (licensed to fly in adverse weather conditions) the old Stinson had no instruments for bad weather flying so we had to have cloud free days to fly. Our only modern day navigation instrument was a portable GPS unit that I had in the back seat to assist with the navigation.

The other bit of modern gear we had was my laptop computer and mobile phone. I could log into the computer at Airservices Australia and download all the weather information and also lodge our flight plans. After downloading and studying the weather that morning we decided we would have a go at getting over the mountains to reach the great western plains of NSW. We knew that if we could get across the mountains we would be clear for the rest of the trip that day.



At the airport we spoke to a local pilot who suggested that the only way over the mountains that day would be to track north for a while towards Brisbane where the mountains would taper off a bit and then we could track towards a mountain gap called Cunningham Gap. If this gap was clear we would be able to cross the range into valleys beyond that would lead us west to the clearer areas. Thus we departed Coolangatta underneath a thick layer of low cloud and headed north.

Arriving in the Boonah area we could see that the cloud was still down on the mountain-tops, but there was a clear area through Cunningham Gap with the western valley behind looking very inviting. We wound our way up the Cunningham Highway watching it twist and turn its way through the gap. The clouds on either side were sitting right down on the peaks, but the brighter glow of a clear valley beyond kept us going.



We later found out that just after we departed Coolangatta, the rain just bucketed down and the regular Virgin Airlines flight couldn't land at Coolangatta due to the bad weather. We were now through Cunningham Gap and in a clear valley heading for Warwick and finally Goondiwindi for a refuelling stop.



As we were taxiing off the runway towards the main apron at Goondiwindi, I could see several media camera crews all set up with their cameras ready to roll. I spoke to John through our intercom and asked if he had arranged TV coverage of our history making flight. He said that he hadn't so we ignored them and continued over to the AVGAS bowser and began our refuelling.

We later walked over to the main terminal to use the toilets and while there found out the media crew were waiting for the Police jet to arrive with an alleged murderer on board.



## **Refuelling at Goondiwindi**

Most of the AVGAS bowzers are now automatic being activated by our “swipe” cards. This was a great convenience and also saves time at each stop because you don’t have to callout a refueller from the nearby town.

We had completed the first two hours of the trip. The fuel range of the Stinson was 3 hours and 15 minutes and so with the statutory reserve of 45 minutes taken off this time, we were looking for a fuelling point every 2 hours and 30 minutes (safe).

Although we were quite tired we decided to continue on another 45 minutes to Moree before calling it quits for the first day. After checking into a Moree motel we had a “granny nap” to refresh us before the evening meal in the motel restaurant. The evening meal turned out to be great as we had a window seat overlooking the local river and watching the summer evening thunderstorm flash over town. Afternoon build ups and evening thunderstorms were typical for most of our flying days, which is why we tried to get most of our flying done early in the day.

The next day took us from Moree to Coonamble and on to Griffith. The fuel stop at Coonamble required us to ring someone from the local Aero Club to come out and open up and serve the fuel as the bowser here was not a “swipe” type.





Coonamble



Coonamble Airport

At Griffith the Aero Club was very friendly and they allowed us to park the Stinson in the club hangar for the night. We found Griffith to be an interesting town and highly recommend it for anyone looking for a stopover.

At the completion of day two we had done another four hours flying and it was at this point we made a decision that four hours flying in the primitive conditions of the Stinson was long enough for each day. Of course four hours flying meant we were on the go for about eight hours, remembering the flight planning before each sector and the refuelling of two sectors and finally the securing of the Stinson at the end of each day.

We had now come as far south as we had planned. With the next sector we headed almost due west towards Mildura. This was taking us just north of all the famous Murray River towns and should have revealed rich farmlands below, but instead it was dry and dusty due to the drought conditions throughout this region. Our aviation forecast downloaded from the Airservices computer that morning warned us of blowing sand and reduced visibility due dust storms. They were right! Between Griffith and Mildura we encountered a red sky full of blowing dust whipped up from the dry red earth below. We began to climb as high as we could to get on top of this dust storm. It was not only a problem for visibility but we were concerned about possible damage to the engine and propeller with the abrasive properties of the dust in the air. At about 5,000 feet we came out on top of the dust layer and so we cruised at this level for quite a while until it was time to commence our descent into Mildura.



Mildura agriculture



At Mildura it was the usual toilet / fuel / food stop and from here it would be on to Murray Bridge where John had arranged to have some friends of his meet us and look after us for a day. Once again the local aero club was keen to have such a rare aircraft visit their airport and we were again treated to the use of a hangar to house the Stinson for our short stay. This turned out to be a bigger blessing than we first realised as a great thunderstorm swept in during our stay, with wild winds and lots of rain.

We had always planned a rest day some where in this trip and so we decided to make it here with John's friends. Due to the bad weather we ended up staying two full days with them and enjoyed their hospitality. It was also a chance to give the Stinson a good check-out for any maintenance issues that may have arisen. I removed the air cleaner to find it was quite full of red sand from the previous day flying through the dust storms.

Finally on New Years Day the weather broke up enough for us to make an escape north to Port Augusta. It was great scenery flying up along the Flinders Ranges and intercepting the top of Spencer Gulf at Port Augusta. Arriving at Port Augusta we were surprised to hear that our traffic in the circuit was a Channel Seven helicopter. Once again I questioned John about our media attention, but he claimed ignorance. We landed ahead of the helicopter and started taxiing towards the fuel bowzers, but the chopper headed straight for the apron and landed there and beat us to the bowzers. Being on a news story job they refuelled quickly with the turbine still running and were soon out of our way leaving us access to the AVGAS bowser. A check of their departure track revealed the truth about their mission. They were not after our story after all but were filming the riots and fire at a nearby illegal immigrant detention centre. Never mind one day we will be famous and end up on TV. A local aviation enthusiast had heard our arrival on his radio scanner and was there to greet us and keen to photograph us and talk about the Stinson.

Ceduna was the planned overnight stop and we still had a lot of miles to cover, so we extracted ourselves from this enthusiast and headed off. One of the motels at Ceduna provides a great service to visiting aviators by providing a shuttle service from the airport to their motel. So after tying down the Stinson for the night we got the ride into town and settled into the motel.

Up to this point on our trip there had been numerous options on our planned route and available towns with airstrips and AVGAS within our 2 hours and 30 minutes fuel range. But from here on across the Nullarbor Plain we only had one option for our route. From Ceduna we headed for Nullarbor Roadhouse and Motel on the Eyre Highway. The roadhouse has its own airstrip out the back and you can taxi right up to the motel where there is an AVGAS bowser.



As soon as we touched down on the airstrip at Nullarbor Roadhouse, I noticed that the ground was moving in a uniform wave effect to the west. A second look revealed that it was a wave of millions of grasshoppers completely covering the ground and all of them hopping west. They were everywhere and had completely taken over the roadhouse. As we walked around and went to the rest rooms we could not walk anywhere without squashing them. At the buildings they were on the walls as well. The refueller told us that they had arrived about two weeks earlier from the north and had then headed off east but had now returned and were heading west.

Grasshoppers on  
the toilet walls





## Nullarbor Roadhouse

We decided to treat ourselves to a Nullarbor Roadhouse lunch, as where we were heading for our next stop there are no motels or shops or food outlets. Yes we were planning to overnight at one of Australia's loneliest airfields, Forrest WA.

Forrest was built as a railway workers camp on the Trans-Australian Railway Line and it also boasted a very large airfield complete with two bitumen runways, radio navigation aids and a refuelling depot. The airfield was originally built as an Airforce emergency remote base. In its prime, the Bureau of Meteorology had a full observation base here complete with a weather radar unit and permanent observer staff. Today the Met station has been automated and reports are transmitted to Perth from the auto sensors.

There are only about six houses left in the town now and very little else. The caretaker and his wife run the airfield fuel depot as well as maintain the airport and the town. They offer accommodation in empty town houses and part of the stay includes joining them for the evening meal at their little cottage. They really look forward to the aviators that choose to stop here for fuel and if you choose to stay the night like we did, you become their life long friends. We had a pleasant evening listening to their life story complete with dragging out the family photo albums and reliving their memories.

Forrest is one of my favourite places. I think I love it because of its intriguing past and the fact that it is so remote and lonely. Every time I have stayed overnight there I have enjoyed walking around the place and in particular walking down the centre of a huge bitumen runway and knowing that I will not get run over by a jumbo jet about to land.





Forrest WA





At Forrest we were able to put the Stinson into one of the large empty Airforce hangars for the night. The next morning we loaded up the plane while still in the cool of the hangar and then pushed it out for a great departure which had attracted the attention of the whole town bringing out the total town population of two people to wave us off.

We had to head slightly south of west on this next sector, leaving the railway line behind and heading for the John Eyre Motel at Caiguna. This was another stop similar to Nullarbor Roadhouse where you land on their airstrip out the back of the roadhouse and taxi into the motel where there is an AVGAS bowser. Caiguna has a very famous landmark about 10 miles north west of the motel. It can only be appreciated from the air because it is so large. Let me explain:

Many years ago when the Eyre Highway was upgraded, a company called Readymix had the contract to make the road. The surveyors and grader operators got bored on their days off and decided to carve out of the low scrub a huge "Readymix" logo. This logo consisted of the words Readymix surrounded by a diamond.





They did an expert job of surveying the shapes and grading them out. The whole logo is about 2 miles wide by about 1 mile high. Thus as I said, you can only appreciate it from the air. On our departure out of Caiguna for Kalgoorlie we flew over the top of this icon. Today it is not as clear as it was when I first saw it many years ago as the scrub is starting to grow back again. Never the less, we did see it and could clearly make it out.

Kalgoorlie was to be our last night out before reaching Perth and we were starting to feel the end of our great trip was in sight. We had crossed the huge continent of Australia in a 1942 Stinson. Something we believe no one else has ever achieved. Arriving over Kalgoorlie we enjoyed looking down into the huge chasm in the ground that is called “The Super Pit” This hole in the ground is huge in area and depth and produces an enormous amount of gold each year. We could see an ant-like procession of huge dump trucks winding their way up and down the spiral access road to the bottom of the pit.

Our landing at the nearby Kalgoorlie Airport was equally as spectacular, as after touching down on the main runway we were caught by a gusty cross wind that “weathercocked” the tiny Stinson around. John found himself fighting to keep the aircraft on the runway as it went sideways down the centreline.

Tyres and wheels do not like going sideways and soon the hot, soft bitumen gave way and the wheel of the Stinson dug in pulling us up with such force that we tipped over onto the wing tip and immediately bounced back onto our main wheels. We both knew this was as far as the Stinson was going, as looking out we could see that one main tyre was flat and the rim cracked.



# The Stinson Story

Philip Smith



We were not able to move because of the flat tyre and we were sitting in the centre of the main runway at a busy regional airport. There had been a Cessna Citation jet from China Southern Airlines on final behind us ready to land and so I quickly called him up on the radio and informed him that we were stuck on the runway. Seconds later he was roaring over the top of us with wheels up and climbing out for another destination. It took us hours to organise ground help and eventually we got a forklift truck to lift the stranded wheel up and tow the Stinson off the runway.

During this time Skywest Airlines had a flight that was due to land at Kalgoorlie and then go on to Leonora. They radioed this aircraft to go to Leonora first and wait there until it was clear for them to come back to Kalgoorlie. Also Qantas had a jet due that afternoon and they elected to cancel that flight from Perth and re-scheduled all their passengers onto other flights that evening.

The airport ground staff had to organise some hot-mix bitumen to fill in the hole our wheel had made in the runway. We certainly made an impression in Kalgoorlie that afternoon.

Knowing that the only spare wheel for a Stinson was in Coolangatta we resolved ourselves to the fact that this was the end of the road for our adventure and arranged for the Stinson to go into a hangar until repairs could be organised. Once in the hangar, closer investigation revealed that more damage was done to the fuselage where the wheel strut goes up into the fuselage and so John and I said goodbye to the Stinson and caught the Qantas flight to Perth.

John's adventures always have a twist to them and it is impossible to guess the outcome. The sequel to this story is that after the engineers assessed the Stinson it was decided by the Insurance Company that it would require the airframe to be placed in a jig to carry out the repairs in order to keep the airframe in true shape. The only Stinson repair shop with a jig was in Coolangatta where it was first restored and rebuilt. So guess what? The Stinson is going back to Coolangatta by truck and we get to do it all over again.



# Next Club Competition

## **NEXT NAC FLYING COMP:**

A low level mini Cross Country with a straight in approach etc.

Team NAC Pilots: Please see attachment for full details.

See you at Northam Aero Club Comp

Mark your calendars! Complimentary morning teas as usual etc.

Cheers, Peter Hill Club Captain 0450415947 prh@aurora.net.au

**09:00, Sunday 10th JULY 2022**

**Next Club Committee meeting is:  
AGM—Saturday 9th JULY 2022  
7:30pm at the Clubrooms**

## NAC Website access QR code

We are slowly sliding into the new technological world!

Here is the latest High-Tech way to access the NAC website.

If you are “QR” code ready then simply scan this code with your phone or tablet and you will be taken to the club website.

What will they think of next!



*(QR code reader apps can be downloaded from the App store or Play store)*

# Membership Renewal & Apparel

## Northam Aero Club Membership & Apparel Order Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Not Renewing

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Membership: ☐ Adult \$55.00 ☐ Junior \$10.00

Club Bank Details: BSB 036-107 Acc Number: 69-2937

Apparel: ☐ Club Polo Shirt \$35.00 – Size \_\_\_\_\_ Name on Shirt: \_\_\_\_\_

100% breathable polyester jersey knit, snag resistant. Knit collar with contrast tipping.

Mens sizes S M L XL 2XL 3XL or 5 XL (185gsm standard 3 button)

Womens sizes 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 22 or 24 (Ladies 215 gsm with open V with 2 press studs)

Club Cap \$25.00 plus \$8.00 postage ☐ Caps also available from the Bar

Total enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to receive an invoice please tick ☐

"Fly About" magazine Yes ☐

No ☐

Many thanks,  
Northam Aero Club Committee

Northam Aero Club Cap \$25.00

Northam Aero Club Polo Shirt \$35.00 personalised



# BAR ROSTER



## BAR ROSTER 2022

JUNE	
4th	1700-1900
11th	1700-1900
18th	1700-1900
25th	1700-1900
AUGUST	
6th	1700-1900
13th	1700-1900
20th	1700-1900
27th	1700-1900

JULY	
2nd	1700-1900
9th	1700-1900
16th	1700-1900
23rd	1700-1900
30th	1700-1900
SEPTEMBER	
3rd	1700-1900
10th	1700-1900
17th	1700-1900
24th	1700-1900

**THE BAR IS OPEN EVERY SATURDAY EVENING**

**Stay tuned for a new Bar Roster in the coming issues of the**

**Fly About**

# June/July 2022



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
13	14	15	16	17	18 Bar 1700–1900	19
20	21	22	23	24	25 Bar 1700–1900	26
27	28	29	30	1	2 Bar 1700–1900	3
4	5	6	7	8	9 AGM 1930hrs	10 Club Competition 900hrs and Committee Meeting 1300 hrs
11	12	13	14	15	16 Bar 1700–1900	17
18	19	20	21	22	23 Bar 1700–1900	24
25	26	27	28	29	30 Bar 1700–1900	31



*\$25.00 available from Northam Aero Club*

## Wanted - Aviation Memorabilia

- Books
- Artifacts
- Photographs
- Old Aircraft Parts
- Signs

If it's old and historic—I'm interested

Adam Price—0428 611 797

## NAC Club Aircraft Bookings



Enquiries— Matt Bignell

0407 873 700

# Classifieds

## Northam Aero Club Merchandise

**Club Polo Shirts with name and club logo—\$35.00**

*Postage available—\$10.00 per order*

**Club Caps with logo—\$25.00 available at the bar**

**Stubbie Holders—\$7.00 available at the bar**

*Postage available—\$8.00*



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# NAC Cessna 172—VH-PGL

## Hire Fee Structure

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*Private Hire - \$260 per hour*

*Dual Training - \$370 per hour*

*TIF's - \$185 per 1/2 hour*

*Briefing - as required*

*Instructor (in owner's aircraft) - \$115 per hour*

### Pre-paid Discounted Block Rates Available

- 5 hours - less 5%
- 10 hours - less 10%
- 20 hours - less 15%

Student pilots may use the discounted block rate for aircraft hire only

Instructor fees remain as priced above

For all further enquiries please contact:

NAC Treasurer - [nactreasurer@bigpond.com](mailto:nactreasurer@bigpond.com) T: 0428 743 031

Aircraft Bookings: Matt Bignell - 0407 873 700

## Membership Renewals

### Northam Aero Club Membership Renewal due January 2022

Our Membership year runs from January to December each year.

The cost of club membership remains unchanged at \$55.00 per year.

Bank Details to make Membership payment to **Northam Aero Club**  
BSB: **036107** Account No. **692937** Reference **(please use your surname to make it easier for us to find you)**

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**Vice President**

Matt Bignell

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**House & Grounds**

Vacant

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