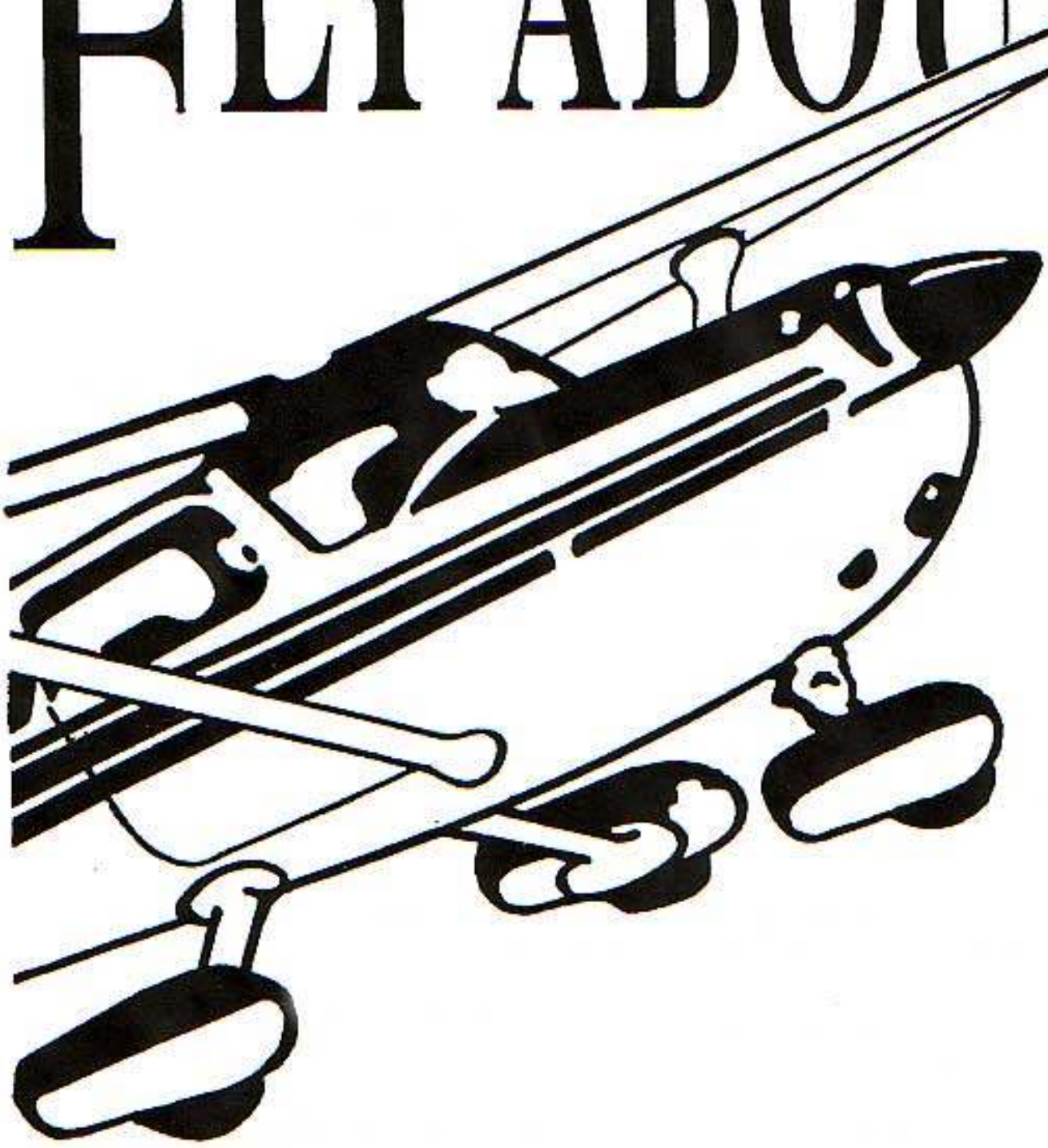
FLY ABOUT



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From the President
July 2010

Well, a brief report from me this month. The weather has been so ordinary it even managed to bring the monthly Club Competition to a premature end. Hopefully the planned fly-in to Kalgoorlie will elicit a more favourable reaction from Mother Nature.

Our recent Annual Dinner was a great night, with all those in attendance enjoying the festivities. As with this and other Club events, much of the work is done behind the scenes. I was glad to make the most of the occasion to express my gratitude to all who have donated their time and means throughout the past year.

Whilst we're on the subject, I'd like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of Life Member, Claude Meunier. Claude attended his last Committee Meeting on Monday night and I took the opportunity to express, on behalf of the Club, our appreciation for his dedication and commitment to NAC over so many years. Claude's achievements in the field of aviation are awe inspiring. Next time you're at the bar, I invite you to peruse the walls of our Club room. They are adorned with some of his, and other aviation legends', achievements.

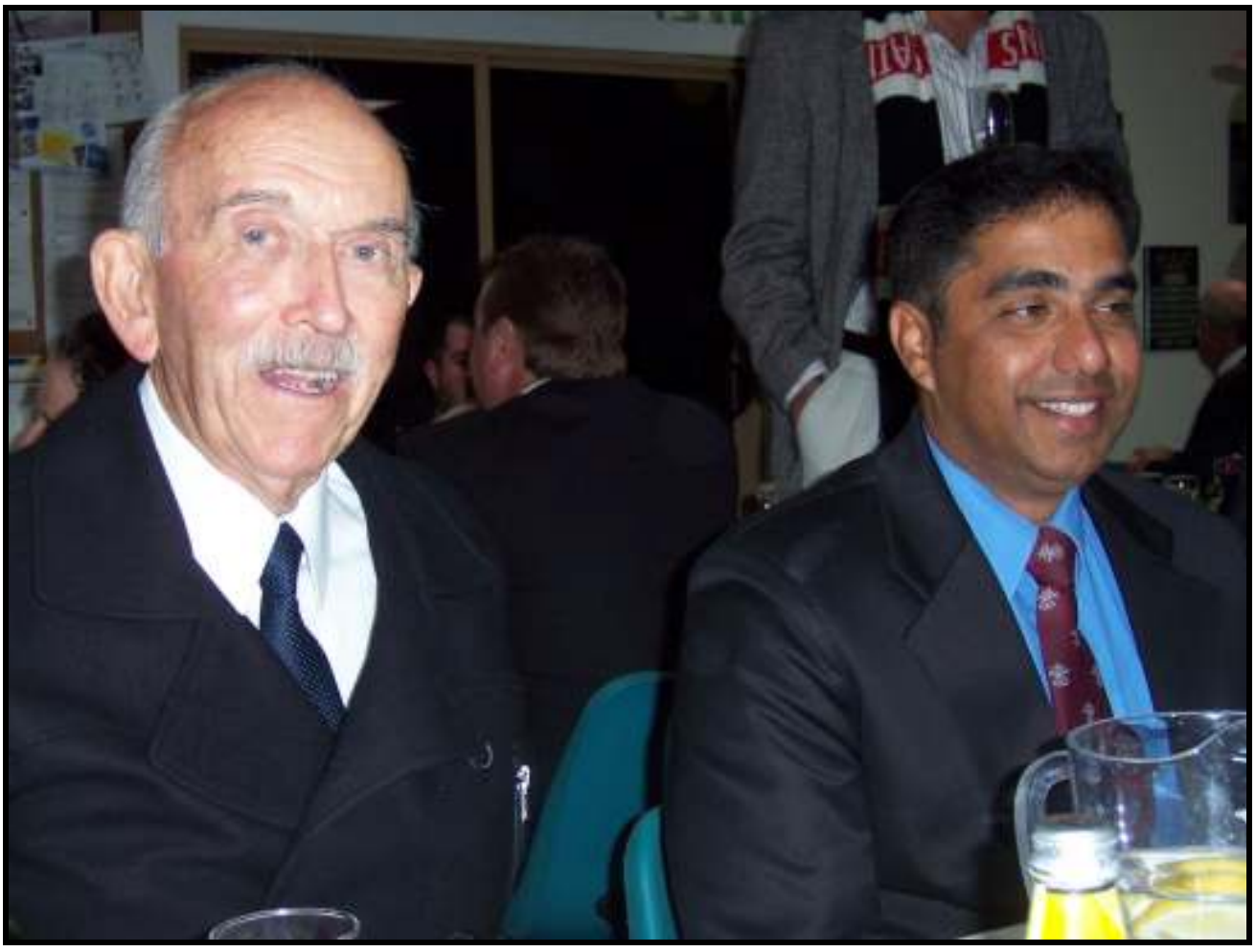
Our AGM is set for Friday 16th July. Without pre-empting the result, I'm confident we have a strong field of Committee candidates ready to further the cause of our Club. As I mentioned at the Annual Dinner, your Club is in a sound position financially. The hire rate of our Club aircraft beats all the competition in WA, and no landing fees at Northam is a bonus. Our instructors are renowned for their professionalism and ability and it will be the new Committee's job to find ways to attract new students and members.

Thanks,

Simon Cooper
Northam Aero Club

(Please note : No club Captains Report this month as the competition was cancelled due to bad weather)

ANNUAL DINNER-2010



Instructor's view – airspace changes from 3 June

CTAF

Prior to 3 June CTAF's were identified as either "CTAF", such as Northam and Cunderdin, or "CTAF(R)" such as Albany and Kalgoorlie. The difference between the two was that radio was mandatory in a CTAF(R), usually because airline operations take place at those aerodromes. As of 3 June, "CTAF(R)" is no longer used, and all non-towered aerodromes are CTAF's. The ones at which radio is mandatory are the ones identified in ERSA as certified or registered or military. In ERSA, underneath the aerodrome designator (eg. YNTM), it says CERT, REG, MIL or UNCR. UNCR means uncertified, and these are the only aerodromes where you can get away without a radio.

Note: finding these labels will require an up-to-date ERSA, which is a rare species in many country aerodrome clubhouses and briefing rooms!

There are a couple of changes to operations at CTAF aerodromes:

- The turn onto crosswind must be no lower than 500 ft AGL. This is going back to the rules prior to November 2005. They no longer say to climb to within 300 ft of circuit height (which, let's face it, was a pretty dumb rule to start with because all it meant was bigger circuits.).
- Joining the circuit on base is allowed. It is not a recommended procedure – joining on crosswind or at 45° to the downwind leg are still the recommended procedures – but you may join on base as long as you have determined the wind and runway in use, you give way to other traffic (ie. don't barge in) and you broadcast that you're joining on base. Joining straight-in is still allowed, provided you are lined up by 3 nm from the runway and you broadcast your intentions.

CAAP 166-1(0) and 166-2(0) provide CASA's advice on flying at non-towered aerodromes, and are available on the CASA website. There's also a booklet describing it all in plain English. Go to the front page of CASA's website and click on the "Guides – Visual Pilot" link or cut and paste this URL: http://www.casa.gov.au/wcmswr/_assets/main/pilots/download/nta_booklet.pdf

Changes at Jandakot

What's even scarier than flying into Jandakot? Change! As of 3 June, Jandakot is no longer GAAP airspace, it's Class D. Prior to 3 June, Class D airspace meant primary aerodromes without radar control, such as Hobart,

Alice Springs or Albury. Class D now includes all the GAAP's, which means there are a few little changes to the way things are done at Jandakot.

Taxi clearances

In Class D airspace you need a taxi clearance before getting to the manoeuvring area. At Jandakot the manoeuvring area starts at Taxiway Bravo (the long one that runs parallel to Runways 06/24.) The runup bays are not part of the manoeuvring area, so you can taxi from the Southern Apron (where RACWA is) apron to the runup bay for Runways 06 without a taxi clearance, but to taxi to the runup bay for Runways 24 you need to taxi along Bravo, so you need a clearance.

When requesting your taxi clearance, say your location on the apron and your first tracking point. Eg. "Jandakot Ground, PGL, Cessna 172, received Charlie, at the southern apron, for Fremantle Golf Course, request taxi." The clearance will probably be to the holding point, and Tower will say the taxiway. Eg. "PGL taxi to holding point Delta, hold short Runway 24R."

That clearance allows you to enter Taxiway Bravo, taxi to the runup bay, do your runups, and taxi to the holding point on Taxiway Delta. Read back: "Taxi to holding point Delta, hold short Runway 24R, PGL."
When you give your Ready call, it's now just "PGL, ready, Runway 24R." You don't need to say the ATIS code or your first tracking point because you've already said all that in your taxi call.

When you land and exit the runway, change to Jandakot Ground and request taxi clearance to the apron. Ground will then clear you as required, including clearance to cross runways.

Airways clearances

In Class D airspace you need an airways clearance. That's always been the case at Jandakot too, but because of the volume of radio traffic, the rules have always been that you don't have to actually say "Request airways clearance." Instead, a take-off clearance or an instruction to enter the GAAP given to you at Powerhouse or Boatyard or 6 South has been your airways clearance.

For take-off, that hasn't changed. A take-off clearance is your clearance to operate in the Jandakot CTR. The departure routes – via Murdoch Uni to Fremantle golf course, via Armadale etc. – haven't changed.
When approaching Jandakot, the old GAAP approach points are now VFR approach points, and while the AIP says they're no longer mandatory,

Jandakot is different. Nothing's changed – ERSA tells you to contact Tower on 118.1 at 6 South or Boatyard or Powerhouse, then report at Adventure World or Forrestdale Lake. The first radio call is the same as before eg. "Jandakot Tower, Cessna 172 PGL, 6 South, 1500, inbound."

One difference on arrival is than in Class D, a clearance to enter is a clearance to descend to circuit height unless ATC specifically says otherwise. So if Tower doesn't want to you to descend to 1000 ft straight away, they may say "Overfly, maintain 1500", then when they're happy for you to descend they'll say "Descend to 1000, join downwind/base/make straight-in approach" or "Make visual approach." "Make visual approach" is a common phrase at Perth but it's new to VFR pilots at Jandakot. Basically it means you're cleared to descend as necessary to join the circuit – there are no further altitude restrictions from ATC.

Also, being Class D, the VMC criteria for Jandakot have changed. The required visibility is still 5 km, but the distances from cloud are now 600 metres horizontally, 1000ft above and 500 ft below, so you won't be doing circuits with a 1200 ft cloud ceiling unless ATC is prepared to give you Special VFR.

In all of this, remember ATC will separate you from IFR aircraft but will only give you information on other VFR aircraft. Separation from other VFR aircraft is your responsibility. See or be hit!
CASA has another booklet describing these changes, also available via the "Guides – Visual Pilot" link or: http://www.casa.gov.au/wcmswr/_assets/main/pilots/download/classd_booklet.pdf

So if you're flying at Jandakot and you haven't done it for a while, make sure you have a look at ERSA. Also, Phil's and my mobile numbers are on the club website, so give us a call if you have any questions.

Kevin Lathbury
Grade 2 Instructor

AUSTRALIA'S WORST AIR DISASTER AT YORK

Sixty years after the Amana crash, with the loss of 29 lives, Tony Rees reviews the events that led to this tragedy, the cause of which has never been established

It was a chilly night in winter, 1950, when a Douglas DC-4 Skymaster, VH-ANA, took off from Guildford Airport bound for Melbourne. There were 29 on board, including five crew.

The four-engined airliner, the flagship of Australian National Airlines, departed at 9.50 pm. Bureau of Meteorology records show visibility at the time was about 16 km. There was nil wind and the cloudbase was 6/8 at 2,500 ft. About 6 mm of rain had been recorded earlier in the day and the 6 pm weather report indicated a temperature of 14.2 deg C at Guildford.

Happier days . . . VH-ANA is handed over at the Douglas factory in the US prior to her departure in 1946 for Australia.

At 9.59 pm the Skymaster, captained by Jim Chapple, reported overhead Perth established on track to Kalgoorlie via Cunderdin. At 10.12 pm, the DC-4, named *Amana,* crashed in timbered country on a farm near Berry Brow Hill, some 12 nm north-west of York and less than 30 nm along its planned track. No further radio transmissions had been received.

Soon afterwards the pilot of a following Trans Australia Airlines DC-4 reported a fire in bushland between Chidlow and York. Two men who lived on the farm were first on the crash scene. They found a 67-year-old Adelaide engineer, in shock and with burnt clothes, wandering about near the wreckage. He died five days later in a Perth hospital. The other 28 aboard perished at the scene, 18 of them burnt beyond recognition.

The subsequent Department of Civil Aviation investigation was unable to deliver a definitive cause of the crash, at that time the worst in Australia's air transport history. Witnesses along the aircraft's flight path reported that its engines had variously run rough, backfired and even cut out completely. DCA investigators were able to determine that one engine had been shut down and its propellor feathered shortly before the crash, and that the remaining three were delivering power on impact. However, without the benefit of flight data and cockpit voice recorders found on all RPT aircraft these days, they really had very little to go on.

They did discover that scheduled water checks had been missed at several refuelling points that day, and speculated that fuel contamination may have been the problem. Bafflingly, the vapour vent floats in the strainer chambers of all four carburettors had been crushed. Investigators postulated that this might have been the result of a fuel pressure surge, but neither the engine manufacturer (Pratt & Whitney), the Australian Research Laboratories, DCA nor the US FAA was able to determine the cause of the surge.

The inquiry was inconclusive and unsatisfactory. A subsequent Air Court of Inquiry in Perth, headed by a Supreme Court judge, was unable to take the matter much further, though it did find that there was no water in the DC-4's fuel tanks when it departed Guildford.

There the matter might have rested had it not been for the efforts of former RAAF air traffic controller and self-professed aviation historian Grahame Higgs, inspired by one of Australia's most respected aviation writers, Macarthur Job, who examined the *Amana* incident in the second of his two-volume Air Crash series (Aerospace Publications, c1991-1992).

In 2001, Higgs and a like-minded friend tracked down the property where the crash occurred on June 26, 1950, and spoke to the owner, who showed the pair the accident scene. A year or so later, he rang Higgs with the news that further wreckage had been found on a seldom-visited corner of the farm about 1.5 km from the main crash site. More than 50 years after the *Amana* went down, new evidence was emerging.

Minute examination of the pieces found at the second site, which were identified by a painstaking process of comparing them with DC-4 photographs as coming from the aircraft's port wing, suggested an entirely new series of events. These pieces showed scorching which indicated a fire inside the wing before the crash.

Job's report detailed evidence given by a farmer and a beekeeper who said they saw a small flash some 20-30 seconds before a "tremendous flash that seemed to light up the sky". Had the *Amana* clipped a tree, rupturing a fuel tank and igniting the highly-flammable Avgas? Higgs suggested such an explosion may well have damaged aileron controls, contributing to a loss of control and subsequent impact with the ground, as well as accounting for the "surge" damage to the vapour vent floats.

(Left)The crash site near York . . . a memorial to the Amana is maintained at the Beverley Aeronautical Museum.
(Right) Popular in pre-email days . . . an ANA picture postcard featuring the Amana.

But why was the aircraft flying so low if three of its 1350-horsepower radial engines were delivering power – more than enough to maintain normal flight? Earlier engine problems reported by observers along the *Amana's* flight path indicate that the aircraft may have been unable to maintain a climb to its flight-planned cruising level of 9,000 ft, but why?

Again, Higgs has suggested an answer which apparently escaped the original DCA investigation. In an article published on the Airways Museum website (http://www.airwaysmuseum.com/Downloads/Amana%20-%20One%20small%20piece%20of%20Jigsaw.pdf),

he gives the following insight:

“Part of the story, well known to the staff of ANA at the time, came to light some time later and concerns the ground engineer who was checking the fuel drain valves for water in the tanks prior to her [Amana’s] departure [from Guildford Airport] that night. In a classic case of ‘interrupted check list’, he was called away to take a phone call from his wife, who berated him over some domestic incident. Unfortunately he neglected to close the cross feed drain cock which he had previously opened as part of his checks.”

Higgs suggests that number four engine may have been shut down because of rough running caused by spark plugs. This was a common problem at the time. As to the operation of the other three engines, he states:

“When they [the crew] went to balance the aircraft by opening the crossfeed valve to draw fuel from number four tank, now not required by that engine, the drain cock, having been left open by the engineer, drew in air. The result was the same as if there had been water in the tanks: the remaining engines all failed due to fuel starvation. Interestingly the investigation does not seem to have considered the possibility of air being the culprit.”

However, we know the crew had re-established power on three engines, and, according to the original investigation, had attempted to re-start the feathered number four engine. There was no indication of control problems and no obvious reason why the pilot should not have been able to fly the aircraft. The cloudbase was probably about 2,500 ft and the highest spot height in the vicinity of the *Amana’s* last moments was 1292 ft, giving a margin between cloud and the ground of 1,300 ft or more – not that there would necessarily have been any visual reference because the area in those days was sparsely populated and there would have been few, if any, lights visible on the scattered farms at that time of night. However, this should not have been an issue because the pilot would have been flying on instruments.

Were Jim Chapple and his crew in control of VH-ANA? If the answer is yes, and there is no reason to suppose that they were not, how did they descend to impact, with three engines delivering power, without realising they were so low? Or had they, while battling with the intermittent engines, lost situational awareness and flown into the ground? Witness reports indicate that there was a noise of revving engines just before the crash, indicating that the crew had perhaps realised that air in the system was causing the fuel starvation and changed tanks, switching on the fuel boost pumps and causing the supercharged radials to overspeed.

There will never be definitive answers to these questions, but Higgs’s argument that power was restored just seconds too late to save the airliner is persuasive. The tragedy remains the second-worst civil aviation disaster in Australia and the worst in WA. ANA never really recovered from the tragedy and was taken over by Ansett in 1957.

Northam Aero Club

HIRE RATES FOR C172 AIRCRAFT

As from the 1/12/2009

✈Dual Hire ---------- $240 hour

✈Private Hire ------- $190 hour

✈TIFs ----------$100 each

✈Instructor only
*Pilot provides own aircraft ---- $80 hour

✈Landing Fees & Air Services Charges:
*Where applicable -These are to be paid by the Pilot or Student Pilot

✈Hire of Life Jackets ---- $10 per jacket

AERO CLUB PILOTS CHALLENGE 2010/2011

(Coming soon)

Errol's Club Calendar 2010

	May	June	July	August
1	**Bar - LESLIE**			**Bar-SIMON**
2	NAC COMP 9am **Bar - LESLIE**			
3			**Bar-LESLIE**	
4			**Bar-LESLIE**	
5		**Bar-SIMON**		
6		**Bar-SIMON**		
7				**Bar - Ashley**
8	**Bar - MATT**			NAC COMP 9am **Bar - Ashley**
9	**Bar - MATT**			NAC Meeting 7pm
10	NAC Meeting 7pm		**Bar - CLAUDE**	
11			NAC COMP 9am **Bar - CLAUDE**	
12		**Bar-ERROL**	NAC Meeting 7pm	
13		NAC COMP/Dawn Raid **Bar-ERROL**		
14		NAC Meeting 7pm		**Bar-ERROL**
15	**Bar - CLAUDE**			**Bar-ERROL**
16	**Bar - CLAUDE**			
17			**Bar - MATT**	
18			**Bar - MATT**	
19		**Bar-RYAN**		
20		**Bar-RYAN**		
21				**Bar-RYAN**
22	**Bar - TBA**			**Bar-RYAN**
23	**Bar - TBA**			
24			**Bar-TBA**	
25			**Bar-TBA**	
26		**Bar-STEVE** **Annual Dinner**		
27		**Bar-STEVE**		
28				**Bar-Les**
29	**Bar - NIGEL**			**Bar-Les**
30	**Bar - NIGEL**			
31			**Bar-SIMON**	

NEXT CLUB COMPETITION

8th August at 9am

NEXT CLUB MEETING

9th August at 7pm

BAR ROSTER

Opening hours
Saturday 5pm – 7pm
Sunday 5pm – 7pm

August		
31rd-1st	-	Simon
7th-8th	-	Ashley
14th -15th	-	Errol
21st-22nd	-	Ryan
28th-29th		Steve

Well! Sometimes one just has to do it!!!

Please make arrangements to swap with someone if you are not available on your rostered day(s)

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