FREE FLIGHT DOWN UNDER

NEWSLETTER OF THE AUSTRALIAN FREE FLIGHT SOCIETY INC

VOLUME 58 NUMBER 1
AUTUMN 2026

MAX MEN 2026



NZ NATIONALS

THE GREAT POT HUNT

AUSTRALIAN FREE FLIGHT SOCIETY Inc.

FRONT COVER:

Not all Roy Summersby's F1Cs come in "fashionable black". This blue one was flown at Lost Hills and it looks very nice. Timekeepers love nice colours in the air.

FREE FLIGHT DOWN UNDER

March 2026

Volume 58 Number 1

This edition of Free Flight Down Under is edited by Malcolm Campbell,
77 Freshwater Circuit, Forest Lake, Australia 4078. email: actrain@ozemail.com.au

Free Flight Down Under is the newsletter of the Australian Free Flight Society Inc, a Special Interest Group of the Model Aircraft Association of Australia. FFDU welcomes contributions in the form of articles, letters, pictures, etc on any aspect of Free Flight or related topics. Contributions can be sent to the above address or emailed to the editor. Electronically prepared material is preferred. Please keep photos separate and no smaller than 200 kb each.

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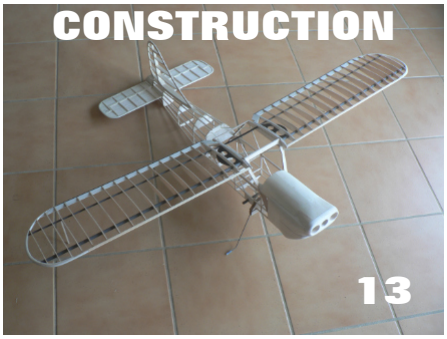


CONTRIBUTORS

Bruce Hao
Vin Morgan
Andrew Linwood
Warren Leadbeatter
Roy Summersby
Len Surtees
Michael Towell







PRESIDENT'S REPORT



As this Autmun 2026 edition of FFDU comes out there are just over 6 weeks to go until the 48th AFFS Champs at Narrendera. The new committee has been getting things organised and the entries are coming in. It's looking like all the usual suspects will be there along with the 2025 F1C World Cup champion Yuan Gao from China who is a regular attendee.

This year we will have the Paul Rossiter Memorial trophy to be taken home by the winner of the AFFS Championships in the F1B Wakefield category.

Paul Rossiter was a highly respected and well-liked member of the Free Flight Community who passed away in 2023.He served as AFFS President from 2012 to 2015, then again from 2018 to 2021 though the challenging Covid19 era. He served as a key liaison between AFFS and MAAA during the changes in relation to Drone rules and he remained a passionate advocate for the future of the hobby, famously calling on the next generation of flyers to step up and guide the society into its next chapter.

Paul started flying control-line and free flight in the 1950s then moved to radio control. With his return to competitive free flight in the 1990s, and a professional background in Physics and Engineering, he developed computer simulations and electronic devices for rubber-powered free flight models to achieve numerous wins in state, national and F1B world cup championships. He also represented Australia in the F1B World Championships in 2009, 2011 and 2015, placing 9th in the 2011 championships in Argentina.

Paul's influence extended well past the flight line through his electronic inventions and thoughtfull contributions to the Free Flight Down Under (FFDU) magazine. Whether he was reporting on international trends or sharing technical breakthroughs, his writing reflected a deep love for the mechanics and community of free flight. As the community reflects on his life, his dedication remains an inspiration to all who pursue the perfect flight and makes this Memorial trophy a fitting tribute to him. RIP Paul.

Another matter I wanted to raise is a question has been coming up more often – mostly overseas at the moment; should we shorten the motor run in E-36 competition flying?

With the Fédération Aéronautique Internationale now defining its F1S class around a seven-second motor run, and the AMA planning on following suit in E36, it's natural to wonder whether we should follow that lead, or stick with the ten seconds we have flown for years.

On the surface, it sounds like a small change. In reality, it shifts the whole character of the event.

A shorter motor run brings everything closer to the ground—literally and figuratively. Models don't climb as high, which means you can't rely on height to bail you out. Flights become more about reading the air, getting the trim right, and making good decisions at launch. When it works, it's very satisfying flying. You feel like you've earned every second.

There are also some practical upsides. Lower climbs tend to mean shorter drifts, fewer long walks, and less risk of losing models over the fence. On tighter fields, that's a real advantage. It also tends to even things up a bit. With less emphasis on raw climb performance, the gap between highly optimised setups and simpler ones narrows, which can make for closer, more competitive rounds.

On the other hand, there's no denying what we give up. The ten-second climb has a presence about it. It gets the model up, and gives that familiar sense of "sending it" skyward and letting it go to work. Dropping to seven seconds flattens that profile. Flights can feel shorter, and for newer flyers in particular, there's less margin for error. If the trim isn't quite there, the flight can be over before it really begins.

There's also the practical reality that many of us already have models trimmed for ten seconds. Changing over isn't impossible, but it does mean time spent re-trimming, and possibly rethinking prop and power setups. For some, that's part of the fun. For others, it's a barrier. e.g. most current timers only support 5 and 10 sec motor runs for the current rules; these would ideally need to be modified to have a 7 sec motor run option.

Perhaps the bigger question underneath all of this is “What do we want E-36 to be for us”. For many, it’s the most accessible form of competition we have—simple, relatively low cost, and easy to get into. For others, it’s also a stepping stone toward more formal classes like F1S and F1Q, where aligning with international rules starts to matter more. There may not be a single answer that suits everyone, and that’s okay. One option worth considering is to let both approaches coexist for a while. We could trial shorter motor runs in selected rounds or events, while keeping the traditional format for others. That would give people a chance to experience the difference without committing to a full change overnight.

IMPORTANT NEWS

At the last AFFS General Meeting

> A motion was moved “**That AFFS implement a requirement that the MAAA card must be shown as proof of insurance etc. prior to any compeF tor flying in any of our events.**"
>
> Moved Roy, Sec Carried.

This will be in force for the AFFS 2026 so please make sure you bring your MAAA Card.

FROM THE EDITOR



An editor's worst nightmare is when the program he's used in various guises over the past 20 years starts to play up unexpectedly, and then refuses to load.I guess it was going to happen, when you use a legacy program whose support stopped after Windows 10.One day it’s going to kick up its heels when it encounters new Windows 11 code it doesn’t understand.And it did.I cannot use the program anymore.

So I’ve acquired a program called Affinity that superceded the Serif Page Plus program I used but it is considerably different in its approach, working with layers and providing vastly more powerful features, most of which I’ll probably never use. But they are there and make for a pretty busy screen as I navigate in unchartered waters. That's my excuse if FFDU looks a little wonky.

Back to FFDU, and what's in it: After reading the reports on Lost Hills, it sounded like it was a great event.Please enjoy what Vin and Roy have to say about it.Len had an exciting time getting to New Zealand for their Nats and a he certainly had a gruelling time on the field.We've had a few actively building new models and we've lost a couple of important aeromodellers this year - the good and the bad parts of an aging group.Mike Pettigrew also entertains us with interesting stories frm the past and the NSWFFS has more motors to sell.

So there's something for everyone in this edition. Please accept the rough layout while I work out the new program. Ignore strange characters, I repaired many.

Max Men 2026

Lost HillsUSA

Photo and Report by Vin Morgan



Simply irresistable.Lost Hills at its very best, just like a golf course!Roy and Albert trimming.Field green and lovely. Bikes at the ready....

The usual four suspects – Roy Summersby, Albert Fathers, Bruce Hao and Vin Morgan (me) flew in the contests at Lost Hills in February. After a small hiccup with the flights at the start, everything worked out well—especially on the meal front—and the condition of the field was outstanding. There had been rain in the preceding weeks and the field was covered with soft grass. So long in some places that models were obscured. The flying had its highs and lows (sorry). Roy seemed a little off the pace, uncharacteristically dropping rounds in the Kiwi and Max Men competitions, but he compensated with an excellent flyoff flight of 7:43 to win the midweek North American competition run by the Canadians.

The hiccup began with a message from Air New Zealand saying that our Wednesday flight from Auckland to LAX had been cancelled. The aircraft was out of service and couldn't be repaired in time. A follow-up message said they were doing their best to get us to our destinations as soon as possible, but the new itinerary had Vin going via San Francisco, while Roy and Albert would travel via Houston. These detours meant we would arrive in Los Angeles too late to collect the car and would have to overnight there.

Fortunately, it took only about twenty minutes to get through to Air New Zealand on the phone and change our flights to the same schedule a day later. We even managed to keep the Skycouches we had booked on the original flights (look up Skycouch—the only way to travel; easily as good as Business Class at a fraction of the price).

At LAX the queues were short and the customs guys didn't even look at the boxes. At Alamo car hire they simply send you out into the yard to choose your own vehicle. We had ordered a medium 4WD SUV, but it wasn't obvious which vehicles were actually four-wheel drive, so we spent some time trying to decipher the insignias on the back. One seemed to include a "4", so we settled on that.

We drove to Lost Hills via Walmart in Wasco to pick up supplies. Now that we no longer stay in an RV on the field we don't need much—just breakfast cereal (surprisingly difficult to find without sugar), milk, fruit, and a few bottles.

Bruce had flown the day before on Qantas, overnighted in LA, and driven up to Lost Hills with Yuan Gao and the Chinese flyers. He was already settled into Motel 6 when we arrived.

After checking in we had a reasonable meal at Denny's.

Friday

We headed out to the field fairly early (it doesn't get light until about 07:00 in the middle of winter). About 2 km from the flying field there are five containers beside the road next to Holloway's sheds. A sign on the shed notes that they have been mining gypsum there since 1932.

The flyers' containers are mainly used to store the motorbikes used to chase models, but we also keep some storage boxes with remnants of civilisation—items we used to carry in the vans: glasses, crockery, cutlery, sleeping bags, chairs, a table, a hammer, a corkscrew, petrol, and so on.

We have two small Yamaha 110 motorbikes. They absolutely make the flying. Although conditions were generally calm, there was a bit of breeze higher up and the models were drifting perhaps 600 m in the rounds and up to 1500 m in flyoffs. I certainly couldn't do all those retrieves on foot.

We flew until about 1:30 pm and then returned to organise things for the next day's competition—putting bobbins on motors, charging batteries, and so on. We also signed up (and paid) for the competitions at the Lost Hills Community Centre.

Later we returned to the field for the first of several meals we enjoyed with Tanya and John Buskell. They had driven from Canada in their new motor-home (very nice – plenty of space for dinner). Tanya likes to cook; we just turn up and bring bottles. Most enjoyable meals and good company. John flew a non-folding F1C in the comps.

Saturday – Ike/Kiwi CompeF F on

Events for F1A, F1B, F1C, F1P, and F1Q were all flown on Saturday.

The weather was perfect: cool just after dawn, quite warm (T-shirts) around noon, and then cooler again for the flyoffs in the late afternoon. Wind was minimal all day, although my seventh-round flight travelled 1200 m in three minutes, landing just two metres short of the orchard.

The wind dropped for the 10-minute flyoff, so my 6:22 flight only travelled about 1200 m. Some of the longer flights ended up in the trees. Twenty-two of the thirty-six starters maxed out.

Albert flew F1A dropping just one round.

Sunday – IKE Minis

We had to be on the field at 07:00 because Roy was flying F1J. To avoid interminable flyoffs they fly the first flight to the ground (10-minute DT time) and use that as the flyoff time if there are multiple maxes.

Roy had a brilliant first-round flight of nearly six minutes, putting him in a winning position. Unfortunately, he then managed to throw left in round two and only achieved 79 seconds. After that we spent most of the day standing around looking at things.

Monday – F1E

We didn't go to watch the F1E event. It was calm early in the day – good for trimming but not very good for slope soaring.

We all did some test flying including Albert flying his F1B. This is an (ex-Craig H) Stephanchuk model that goes rather well. Albert's legs have told him he is retiring from F1A, so he is switching to F1B.

Tuesday – The Great F1B Experiment

This event was organised by Walt Ghio, based on an idea from Mike Woodhouse, to reduce the number of flyoff participants in F1B by making the flying more difficult. Thermal detection devices are banned and flyers are given limited flying windows (for example, ten minutes—similar to a flyoff).

As an experiment it was largely unsuccessful because the conditions made maxing easy all day. Of the fifteen starters, twelve maxed out.

The day was calm and overcast. Just before round one it looked as though it might rain, so rather than risk one of my new models I switched to my older 1500-span Andriukov model, it actually flies quite well. Alex later told me that a similar short-span model was used to win the World Championships in Romania last year.

The time limitation—intended to prevent flyers waiting for thermals—made little difference because there were no thermals anyway. In fact, it turned into a pleasant "wind-and-throw" day.

There was to be an eight-minute flyoff, but this would have taken the models into the oil field so after a flyers' meeting it was decided to hold a six-minute altitude flyoff instead (altitude at six minutes determined the ranking).

Aram Schlosberg flew at the end of the round and found a little helpful air, and was at 60.1 m at six minutes. I managed 6:05, but my height at six minutes was –6.1 m (over the road and in the hollow), placing me seventh.

The Chinese flyers made dumplings on the field—excellent—but it became cold and windy in the

evening, so we headed home fairly early, stopping at the ice-cream shop on the way.

Wednesday / Thursday – North American Cup

The North American Cup scheduled for Wednesday was postponed until Thursday because rain and wind were predicted. There was no rain but it was a bit windy (though very flyable)

Thursday turned out calm, clear, and cold—two layers of down was comfortable.

There is no flight line for this event; everyone flies in a fairly compact gaggle. This manages the group well and is arguably fairer than a line where the ends may have an advantage or disadvantage depending on the wind.

Bruce and I set up near the edge of the gaggle and stayed there all day. The flying was straighforward for the first two rounds— wind-and-throw. Later rounds required short waits for suitable signs: warming air, a puff of wind, or other models climbing in lift.

In round three I broke a motor in the tube. It took some time to extract it and the breaking motor also dislodged ballast inside the front of the tube. I had to tape it to the outside.

Five rounds were flown with four-minute maxes for rounds one and two. In F1B, twenty-five of thirty-seven flyers maxed out.

In the 10-minute flyoff at 5 pm, Tomer Obligenarz missed the max by just two seconds. Andriukov was second with 8:42 and Charlie Jones third with 8:13. Bruce finished 15th with 6:10 and I was 17th with 5:47.

Roy starred, topping the fifteen flyers in the F1C flyoff with 7:43—beating arch-enemy Yuan Gao, who finished third with 7:03.

Saturday – Max Men

Saturday was Max Men day for F1B, F1C, and F1P. There were pole positions to launch from. Bruce, Albert, and I set up near the middle of the line.

The first three rounds had excellent conditions with easy maxes, but quite a strong wind developed in round four. Bruce accidentally started the timer when a gust hit the model while he was waiting to launch. Although he launched ok, the timer had already been running for a few seconds, so the VIT came in early and the model looped. He only got 1:51.

I also did badly in the windy sixth round, launching into poor air to get 2:57.

The contest was stopped after six rounds. It actually wasn't too windy to fly but models were going across the road into the oil field. The flight-line was moved upwind for the flyoff.

Albert flew well all day (I'm sure my motors helped!) and made the flyoff, scoring 4:10 for 16th place. Because of the wind, a six-minute altitude flyoff was used. Gorban was at 84.7 m at six minutes, Sheng 41.8 m, and Kovalenko 20.8 m. Twenty of the forty flyers made the flyoff.

Roy had a rather ordinary day and dropped two rounds.

Dinner had been organised at Gabby's for presentations. We went—against our better judgement, as it turned out. It was expensive and not very good, so we returned to console ourselves with whiskey and Baileys.

Sunday / Departure

On Sunday we went out late to return equipment to the container. It was Max Men Mini day, so we watched the Smalls and chatted with other flyers. Tony Matthews had an impressive all-carbon F1G (12 g carbon over Rohacell with large cut-outs in the wings covered with plastic film). It looked excellent, although he managed to drop a round.

A conversation with Brian van Nest suggested rain was forecast overnight. If it rained, the containers would be surrounded by mud, so we made a second trip to return the remaining equipment.

That proved to be a good decision. When we woke on Monday morning it was pouring and looked as though it had rained all night. It rained the entire drive from Lost Hills to Los Angeles, with rain and fog through the hills. We saw one car upside down and another off the road. Roy did a sterling job driving all the way.

Vin Morgan.



Fab Feb

Lost Hills USA 2026

* Kiwi Cup* North American Cup* Max Men

Photos and reportRoy Summersby

Roy says"*My report is F1C only with a few other bits thrown in*."

We, the Fab Four, Vin Morgan, Bruce Hao, Albert Fathers, and myself, once again left Australia on the 5th Feb.It should have been the 4th but the plane hadsome technical problems withthe wing and needed some work done on it. We did tell them we could fix it as we had some carbon tow and Zap. Not being members of the right union, they said No and they would get their men to sort it out. After the one day delay we met up in Auckland and boarded the Boeing 777 (with the wing fixed we hoped) for the long haul to the USA. Why did we go Air New Zealand again? Because they have what is called a Sky Couch which for old blokes like Vin and myself means we can lay down and get some sleep.It is also a lot cheaper than Business Class which is just too many dollars for me. Once we were in Lost Hills, we would join around 120 modelers from all over the world to compete in the Fab Feb competitions.

Day 1

Arriving in LAX we were again surprised to find the place near empty, straight through customs etc, no big queues and the officials were super friendly. So itwas out of the airport into the shuttle bus to the hire car company. Alamo have a great service, no hassles here, we were on the road to Wasco in no time. There we bought the necessary items like a little food and a trolley full of wine, then onto the ¾ star Motel 6.

Day 2

Next morning off to the container to prepare the retrieval motor bike and pick up other items like chairs, tables, hammers and items needed for the motel, then out to the field. The field was the best I have seen it in the twenty-five years or so that I have been going, it was magic, short to long green grass everywhere. The organizers had once again prepared a large area where most of the flying was to take place. It was a large square, F1A on one side, F1B on another side, F1C on the third side and car parking on the fourth. This was how they did it last year and it worked out very well. Arriving a day late meant we had lost one day of practice so we had a bit of catching up to do. I managed to fly three of my four models and they seemed to be performing well.

Day 3

Kiwi Cup. F1A, B and C

Thiswas the first comp and seventeen flyers made a start in F1C. 7 rounds, 2 X 240 then 5 X 180. The first fly off was six-minutes and three flyers made it to go to a ten-minute fly off late in the evening. The last fly off timeswere 1st Gao Yuan CHN 412, 2nd Michael Mashiach ISR 404, 3rd Artyem Babenko UKR 403. It was a perfect day for F1C flying except for me.On the seventh round after a very good climb I managed to get pushed out of the thermal and was on the ground for just 159 seconds.

Day 4

KiwiF1J

Not a big field - I think 6 and I certainly stuffed up . After putting up a great flight to the ground with a time of 6.20 minutes in the first round I launched it left in the second round to only make 1.???. Naturally the rest were maxes but it was all over for me. Again, perfect weather.

Day 5

This day we spent practicing , Vin and Albert with F1B, myself flying number 4 model. Also took some time out to watch the vintage FAI models. Light cloud and very light breeze.

Day 6

F1B Experiment

Conditions on the day were very stable with very light wind so it didn't prove anything for the organizer.Iit really was a day of practice for the F1B boys. Albert and myself sat and timed. I think this was the coldest day; maybe it was because we were just sitting and not flying.

Day 7

Wind and rain were predicted and there was some but nothing to stop flying. The following days were to be much better so they used it as a reserve day. We used the break to make a trip back to Wasco to replenish our dwindling stocks of wine and a few items of food.

Day 8

North American Cup. F1A, B and C

Twenty-one starters in F1C. This is always a five round comp as they like to finish it in the day so food and champagne can flow freely while there still a little light in the evening. 2 X 240 then 3 X 180 rounds, again the weather was perfect and 14 made the fly off. They decided on a ten- minute fly off with just enough time before dark. The scores were very close between the fourteen flyers just forty-seven seconds between 1st and 14th. I flew early and seemed to pick a little bit of good air but through the binoculars I could see four other models with their lights flashing. I thought this was going to be close, and it certainly was. 1st Roy Summersby AUS 463, 2nd Yury Shvedenkov Can 458, 3rd Yuan Gao CHN 423

Day 9

Max Men InternaFonal for F1A

Once again. Seven rounds which includes 2 x 240 seconds and then 5 x 180 seconds. This comp has always been split up with F1A on the first day and B and C on the second. Albert only flew five rounds, his legs just ran out of energy.He needs wind to get a good launch.

Day 10

Max Men F1B and C

Again, perfect conditions for flying to start with, but a change was coming. By round 4, models were going about a kilometre. After round 5, a hold was called and the line was moved. Round 6 was held but they cancelled round 7. I started well then went bad with a rich engine run in round 2. I dropped round 4 with a very bad launch as the model slipped in my hand. Maxed round 5, I didn't fly round 6 as I had dropped, so I helped Yury from Canada find his model in the oil field. On returning to the new flight line, I found out that Albert had maxed out in F1B.Well done Albert. We have one in the fly off!

Day 11

Mini Max Men Events

I guess I was getting tired by this stage and elected not to fly. We went to the field and watched the small events for a time then packed the bike away ready for next year.

Day 12

The rain had started as predicted just as we left the motel at 10am. The drive to LA was not enjoyable, rain, rain and more rain all the way to LA. I was very happy to get out of the driver's seat at Alamo. A few hours wait at the airport then into the big silver tube as the Sky Couch was waiting for me.

Summing up. It was once again a great Fab Feb, good organization, very good weather, cold, yes, but I have been there when it has been much, much, colder. After all that is what you get in February, as it's still winter there. Great to see our friends from all over the world again. I was told that there were 120 entries from 17 countries, down a little, but with wars going on some flyers had to stay at home and do their bit.I wasn't happy with my performance as I dropped a few rounds that I shouldn't have. Getting a win did make up for it, so YES, I came home happy. Will I be back next year, I sure will.

Roy took some happy snaps



Guy Mennano - GAS


Albert's "new" F1B


The Chinese open air Banquet


Albert on the village green


Bruce winds in F1B


Albert follows


Albert launches without DPR


Canadian John Buskell in F1C


Yury, Roy and Yuan

Bruce also took some photos


Vin winds


Albert had easy retrieves in F1A


They all used the bike. Here's Bruce



Vin waits for the right moment



Vin, And Roy observe as Albert records the score

New Zealand 2026 Model Flying National Championships

Photos and reportLen Surtees

For me this was a chance to return to NZ to catch up with friends and try to improve on last years placings in outdoor Discus (TLG) FF glider and Indoor Hand Launch glider.

I had planned to spend the whole day before driving down to Brisbane Airport (a 3 hour drive) to carefully pack my new empty glider carry box and personal items. That morning my van decided to blow a head gasket and there was no way I could drive there. Living in a small remote fishing village, my only option was to phone the Greyhound Bus Service which stopped in my area once a day so they could drop me off at Brisbane Airport.That was the good news, the bad news was *i* had 20 minutes to get on the bus. No time for a shower, all my gliders were dumped and crammed in along with a basic repair kit. In the panic rush, I forgot the miniature battery to activate the radio DT on my TLG. I stuffed some shorts and T-shirts and shoes in my back pack and only just made the bus.

Arriving at the Nat's headquarters I completed my registration and to my surprise I was told my registration fee and event fees were free! FREE - this was offered to all overseas competitors. Now that is an idea that Australia could embrace.

My main focus was the Free Flight events but I did make it to the Radio Hand Launch Glider field which was a multi-discipline event and it really highlighted their exceptional flying skills - quite an eye opener. I managed to meet and discussglider wing developments with Joe Wurts who has been recognised as the world best over a long period of time. Joe's glider designs have been produced in the Ukraine for over 10 years.

At the FF field my new STING 36" TLG was performing well, with one flight (after radio DT) landing a very long way from the flight line. Yes, a FF competitor luckily had a miniature battery that fitted in the fuselage cavity. Thanks Paul S.

Due to the location of my glider i was forced to wade thru waist-high dense grass with rose thorn stems tightly entangled meaning no escape from a thousand cuts with both legs and

arms bleeding. And I was also surrounded by live electric fences to control cows. An hour later I was rescued by Rob Wallace in the farmer's truck. Rob had been out to rescue Roger Morrell who injured himself whilst climbing over a fence which collapsed. Luckily Roger was able to use his phone to alert the flight line of his predicament.

On arrival back at the flight line I had lost all interest in the Catapult class, placing third. I had also entered Hand Launch Glider (javeline launch) but elected not to fly due to the litt le time left. I was determined however to win Tip Launch Glider and, with my last flight, made a max to win.

Indoor glider is the main event for me as design selection, building skills, trimming ability and physical strength all have to combine for ultimate performance. This was keenly contested with 8 large foam flapped wing designs along with all-balsa gliders. Also CLG was introduced for the first time and about 12 pilots competed. I built an all-balsa glider with flaps, being a Stan Buddenbohem design. Stan originally designed this glider in late eighties and updated it to current form in the early nineties. This glider set the F1N world record for Category 1 back in 2005 in NZ and is still current. I won both HLG and CLG.The total best flight times of my HLG and CLG were less than a second apart!

Other indoor flying events were Hangar Rat and Peanut and Scale, all very well run with great enjoyment had by all pilots. It's a pity that Indoor FF has fallen away in Australia. In my opinion, this needs to be addressed, otherwise it will be lost.

Len Surtees
STINGMK2GLIDERS.COM



The Excellent Indoor Hall



Kevin Botherway MFNZ President with Peter Williams



NZ assorted indoor foam flapped gliders



Len Surtees with indoor HLG perpetual trophy. Len had also won trophy that 25 years ago!

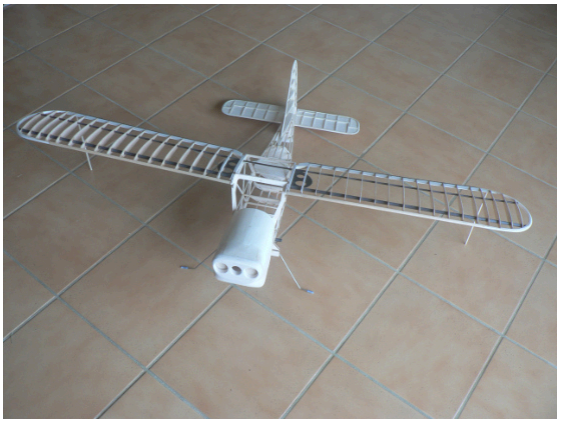
Construction Corner

Stinson L5-ASentinel

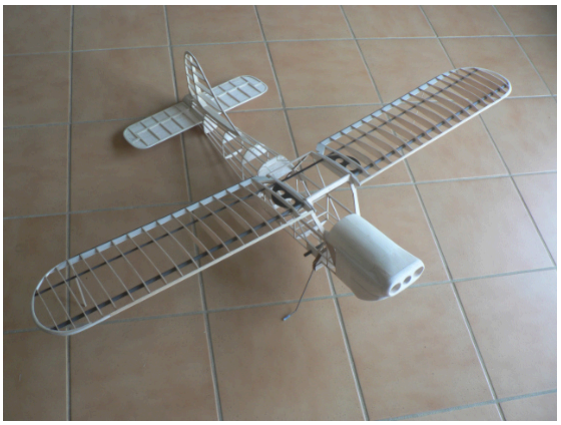
By Roy Summersby

This is the next cab of the rank as the old saying goes. Why pick on the L5-A?Well for some silly reason I wanted a model which was used in the second war, one that would fly and one that I could put invasion strips on. Having built a Stinson Voyager from a Dumas kit for kit scale, why not build its brother? The Dumas Voyager which was designed for rubber (I have a .5 Mills in mine), is very light and flies extremely well. At first glance they look like the same aeroplane, so why not just repaint it to get what I want. Looking a bit closer, there are quite a few differences with the military version. The main ones being the stabilizer and the cockpit. First a little bit on the Sentinel. The Sentinel evolved from the three seat Voyager 105 and competed with several others for a government contract, and was successful. Eventually a total of 1,731 L-5s were manufactured as a military observation plane. Adding to this they were adapted for Coast Guard and ambulance duties. They were also used by the RAF and the US Marines. In total 3,590 Sentinels, were built.

The model, I have made 1/8th scale, giving it a wing span of just over 50", which I think is a nice size. Wings are built to scale airfoil section and rib spacing. I have used carbon tube spars to avoid showing them on the surface. I must thank Ray Harveyfor cutting out these ribs as well as some fancy formers for me by laser. The trailing edge is 1/16" sheet balsa with a carbon rear edge so the covering shouldn't show any lines at all. They are held on the fuselage using a fibre glass tongue panel which goes through the fuselage and into ply wing ribs, giving a knock off system as per tongue and box. The main support for the wings will be the struts coming from near the undercarriage. The rest of the airframe is fairly standard construction. I will be using a SAM 1.2 for power. It will be inverted and mounted on a plate which in turn is screwed to wide bearers giving room for thrust adjustments. The engine has the RC throttle and hopefully, I will be able to fit some timing device. I do like to be able to throttle back and have them land under low power, much more realistic and safer on the model than gliding in.









Andrew Linwood has also been busy, but didn't have time to write anything - so enjoy his nice photos.



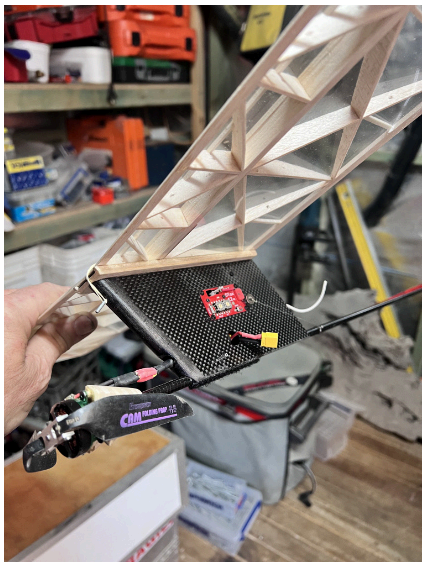
That's one of my photos after CHATGPT had a go at it. Wazza and Andrew up front and Ian Haig (love it!) and Mark Ellins in the background.

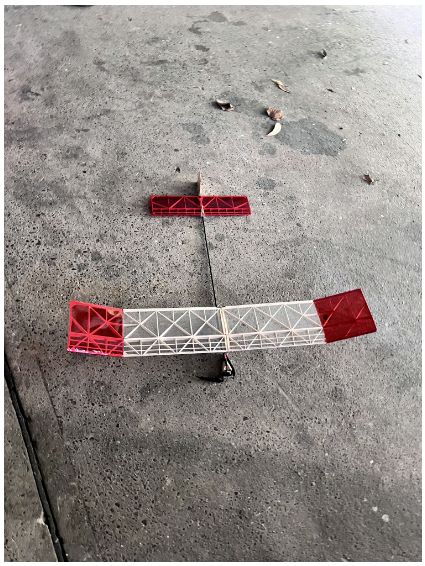




Model above is an Eliminator with fitted with an Elfin 1.5 diesel

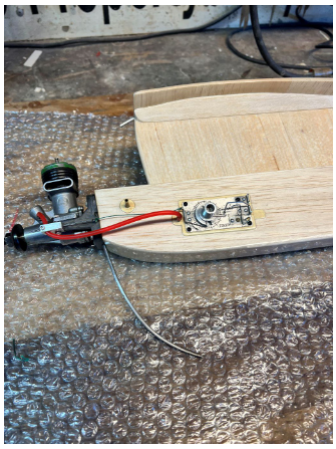
Lower 3 photos are of a very nice Super Pearl 202 EF with Cobra motor E36







This is a GEEF, powered by a Green Head K & B 19







Yella Jacket CLG

A few weeks out from the Hunter Valley Champs I was getting ready some new TLG's and CLG's. But, with a few phone calls back and forth with Len Surtees and the promise that he had a new light weight Sting 15, I knew I had to do something different to try and get the edge on him.

Now, I've had success with Lens Sting 15 so, I knew I needed something really good to go up against it. What I needed was light weight, more wing area, and clean enough to get more height. Plus the obligatory my namesake wingtips!They have proved their worth on several designs in the last 20+ years.

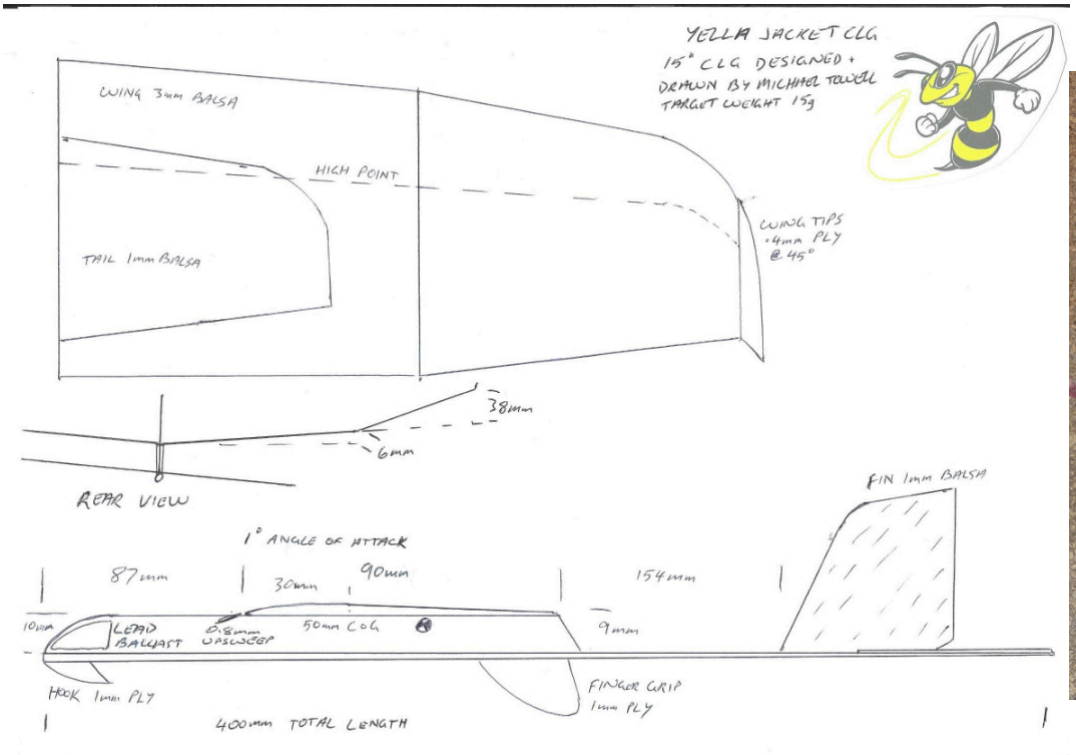
So, armed with some wood, a rule, knife and a sanding block I got to work. Slightly thinner wing at 3mm, high point at 30% with a slight (0.8mm) upsweep at the leading edge and a double taper merging into the ply wingtips. All combined to a clean, nice-looking wing that looked the goods.

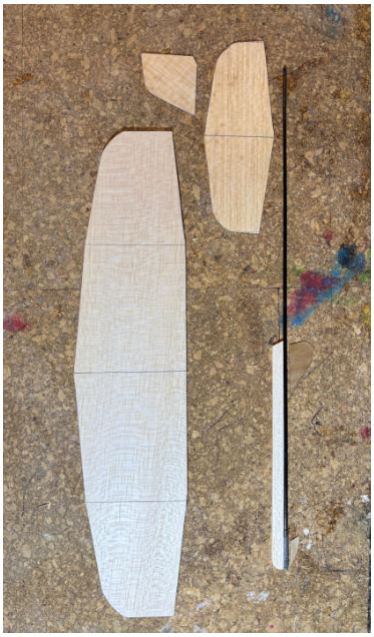
The rest of the model is pretty straight forward. I used a 3.5mm tapered boom from Len Surtees, don't forget the 1-degree Angle of Attack. Tail tilt is equal to the inner panel dihedral. Finish in your favourite technique, for me I used 3 coats of non-tautening dope and micro balloons sanding between each coat.

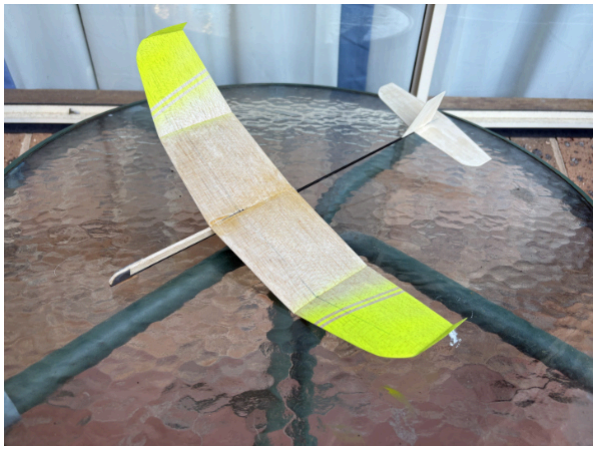
Trimming was pretty straight forward, test glide until happy and then let her rip. With a few minor tweaks here and there, I found my launch angle at about 60 degrees with slight right bank at full stretch. With a large sweeping climb transitioning into the glide super high. Trimming in dead calm at Richmond showed real promise, then at the HVC it handled the turbulent conditions really well, to come out victorious with some impressive flights.

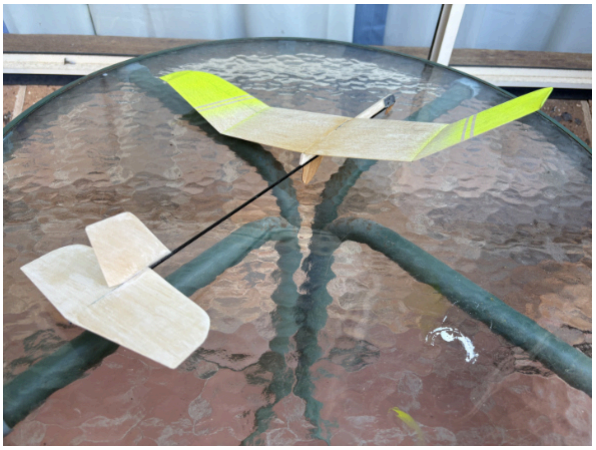
Do yourself a favour and add a Yella Jacket CLG to your collection.

Michael Towell









1957 - The Year of The Great Pot Hunt

In the December 2024 edition of FFDU we published a story about Basil Healy, one of our most senior active modellers, and his attendance at the 1957 Nationals at Campbell Town in Tasmania.It was well received, so we decided to release a bit more of the story Basil wrote about 1957 in which he described it as “the year of the great pot hunt.”

Twenty-seven years ago, Basil wrote the various stories about that 1957 modelling year and, of course, the period he was describing is now 67 years ago…….

It’s a long time ago but it was a time some of us describe as “the good old days” where even motoring was an adventure.

So, here goes another part of the 1957 saga as told by Basil in his inimitable style:

PROLOGUE

For forty years I have agonised over how best to document that momentous year when Arthur (Coop) Cooper, his wife Barbara, and I travelled no less than 7000 miles to compete in free flight competitions. This achievement on its own was quite a remarkable effort at the time but was even more outstanding when you find that our mode of transportation was a 1954 Standard 8.The interior of these little cars could only be described as spartan with seats not exactly orthopaedically designed and certainly not intended for long distance travelling. Access to the boot was by folding down the rear seats, a feature which was quite useful because with three passengers you could leave one backrest folded down allowing the fitment of long items, i.e., the overflow from the model box carried on the roof rack.



Power from the 800 c.c. motor was a modest 26 horsepower giving a top speed on level ground of 62 m.p.h if the motor was in good tune, and a cruising speed of 50 m.p.h.Even with a 72” x 12” x 12” model box on top we still managed to cover 500 miles in a day on a number of occasions.*(MP – ConverÅng these figures to metric makes them even more impressive: 50 m.p.h is 80.4 km/hour cruising speed, and 500 miles is just over 800 kilometres!)*

Despite all its shortcomings the little Standard 8 was a delight to drive with good roadholding and cornering ability with light and sensitive steering.The same could not be said for the brakes which faded badly if abused on long downhill runs. Fortunately, the gearbox provided good braking in second and third gear, so you learned to row with the gear lever.

THE NORTH COAST CHAMPIONSHIPS – EASTER 1957

Following an invitation extended by Russ Hammond and Adrian Bryant during the previous nationals at Traralgon, I convinced Coop and Barbara to accompany me to the North Coast Championships at Lismore. Accordingly, entries were sent off and plans were made to depart very early on Good Friday morning.

The model box was packed on the Thursday night then I drove back home for a few hours’ sleep before being woken by the alarm at 4:00 a.m.Coop and Barbara were up and waiting

for me, so I stowed their bags and headed north on the Pacific Highway.It soon became evident that a lot of people had the same idea, and four hours later we reached Newcastle! (*MP – Today it is a 110 kph freeway, but north of the outskirts of Sydney in 1957, this road was twisÅng and hilly with no chance to pass another vehicle and was renown as one of the worst traffic spots in the Sydney area).* At the rate we were going it would take two days to get to Lismore. At Hexham we made the decision to take the New England Highway *(more inland route)* and cut back across to Lismore from Tenterfield as it had to be better than the current rate of progress. Lunch time saw us at Tamworth and feeling that we were making good progress.

The Moonbi Ranges played havoc with our average speed for a couple of hours then Coop, at the wheel, really put his foot down on the "go" pedal.During this period, he was unable to roll his own cigarettes and delegated the task to Barbara and I. After some abysmal efforts he swore that he would make up a stock in his next spell from driving.

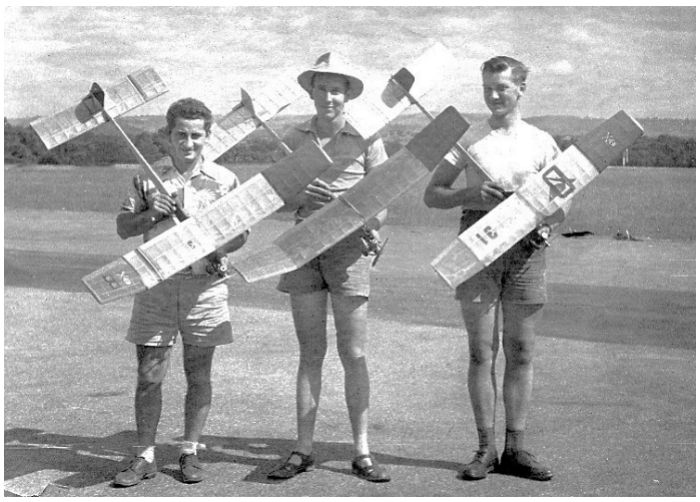
We never had to roll cigarettes again on any of our subsequent trips together.

Nightfall found us just out of Tenterfield, so we kept going on into town. Enquiries at the first hotel for accommodation proved fruitless, but when the publican found that we had driven from Sydney he did a quick phone around and located us a bed but no breakfast. Not only that, but he also offered us a free drink! We had a meal and then found our lodgings for the night, right next to the shunting yards! I was so tired I did not hear a thing until Coop shook me just after dawn at 5:30 am. Back on the road again we located the Bruxner Highway and set off for Lismore. The road soon became gravel surfaced and dusty.

At one stage we were coming downhill on a road cut into one side of a valley with a 90 degree turn onto a one lane bridge at the bottom followed by another 90 degree turn off the other end up the opposite side of the valley. Coming towards us on the opposite side was a truck loaded with cans of milk. "What do we do?"said Coop, "try to stop, or race him to the bridge?" "Race him" I replied. As we slid around the second turn off the bridge and straightened up, the truck passed us. A collective sigh of relief was breathed all around.

Further down the road we encountered a tick gate where they check produce and cattle for the presence of cattle ticks.This one was locked and apparently unattended. Several loud honks of the horn produced an answering call from somewhere down in the scrub and eventually the inspector appeared and wanted to know what was in the box on top of the car roof.We told him it contained model aircraft and then he wanted to know if they were packed in straw. He wouldn't let us through until we unlocked the box to show him they were packed in newspaper.

Somewhere along the road we found a café and had some breakfast and then proceeded on until we reached Lismore just before lunch. We proceeded straight out to the aerodrome where the flying was to be held and were immediately astounded to find that it was just a large paddock with a mown strip adjacent to the road. The remainder of the paddock was covered in Paspalum five feet high!There were cows grazing in it and they had created pathways through it all – certainly not a good place to go chasing free flight models. Fortunately, the only events flown that afternoon were chuck glider and power scramble, both low key events with few excursions into the Paspalum jungle.



Coop won chuck glider, and Russ Hammond won the power scramble event after staving off a determined challenge by Adrian Bryant. We then retired to Adrian's home for a drop of good country hospitality and a good night's sleep. Next morning I was up early and found a garage with mechanic on duty and was able to get an oil change and grease on the car before breakfast. (More about this episode later). Back out at the aerodrome we found that the drift was across the Paspalum. The events to be flown were Open Rubber, Open Power and Open Glider, all high-performance events with three-minute maxes.

Coop was first away with his rubber model, and I followed shortly after with a power model. Both D.T.'d in the long grass so we went in after them.Shortly after, I saw Coop appear above the grass and start looking around him – he was standing on a fence post! He had missed his model by less than six feet. He submerged again and returned triumphant with his model. Even when walking along the cow paths in the grass it was necessary for you to lift your feet high to clear the tangled dead grass at ground level. After a few retrieves we were all complaining of tired legs. At around midday Coop emerged from the Paspalum patch at a stumbling run, all out of breath. "I just came face to face with a gentleman cow" he gasped, "and he wasn't very friendly". He then re-entered the paspalum jungle via a different track and shortly re-emerged with his model. Later in the day while we were relating this incident to Adrian Bryant, he said he wouldn't have used the field if he knew there was a bull in it. Apparently, he'd had a very narrow escape from one a couple of years earlier and didn't trust them at all.



The outcome of the flying was that Coop, after quite a tussle just pipped Adrian Bryant in open rubber. I won open power and Russ Hammond won glider with his well-proven "Liftsifter". We returned to Adrian's place for a bit more of the country hospitality.

Next morning we were up bright and early, but there was no sign of Coop. Eventually he staggered stiffly in for breakfast complaining that he had seized-up at the hip joints. "Oh great", I thought, "I'm going to have to drive all day without a break". We had breakfast, lowered Coop carefully into the car and set-off for Sydney.

We were just settling down to the steady throb of the little Standard's motor when I was suddenly alerted by the oil pressure warning light coming on. I hastily

switched off the ignition. We coasted to a halt and got out to view the line of oil splashes down the road behind us.Investigation revealed that the sump plug had come out, but as the motor had stopped without any clatters and bangs, I presumed it would probably be OK if I could find the sump plug or put a cork in the hole and refill it with oil. Obviously, the mechanic hadn't tightened the sump plug after the oil change the previous day. Just then, a truck appeared heading towards town, and I hastily flagged him down and asked if he could give me a lift. Before going I asked Barbara if she could walk back along the oil splashes to where they start and see if she could find the sump plug.

The trio into town seemed to take ages before the truck driver finally deposited me at a garage where I bought a gallon of engine oil and then hitched a ride back to the car. To my surprise, Barbara had found the sump plug and its washer. Coop, despite his stiff hips had crawled under the car and fitted it and they were both happily listening to the radio awaiting my return. After topping up the engine oil, the warning light went out immediately and there were no suspicious noises from the motor, so we were on our way again. After a few tentative miles we returned to our normal 50 mph cruising. A check of the oil level at the next break revealed no further oil loss so we continued homewards without any further incidents apart from the usual traffic congesti on between Newcastle and Sydney.

So ended our Easter journey to the North Coast Championships.

FIXING A BENT CARIBOU

by Basil Healy

Preamble – by Mike Pettigrew



I've written about Basil Healy previously and identified him as the Australian model flyer that's attended the most Australian Nationals Championships. Basil, now in his early 90's, has a history in our sport that spans generations. He is still very active in R/C Old-Timer, but he was also very active and successful flying free flight back in the 1950's and he goes back so far as to be able to claim to have had mates like Bond Baker and Alan King – both Wakefield world champions, and while they may be revered in history by us younger folk, they were his friends and an everyday part of the flying field scenery to Basil back in those days.

Basil is a born storyteller and has his own unique, laconic style; I've never known him to be any different and I've known him for over 60 years……

Hand in hand with his pursuit of all thing's aeromodelling, Basil also had a job, of course, and his was an interesting one to those who liked aeromodelling and all sorts of aircraft in general. Basil worked at a reasonably senior level for Hawker De Havilland at Bankstown Airport.

I've recounted how a year back Basil leaned on the window sill of my car door and spent almost half an hour telling me about the problems that can be associated with unlocked Caribou nose wheels which in itself seems an odd thing to discuss, but Basil has a way of holding your attention and I enjoyed the discussion not only for the technical issues involved but also for being able to spend a bit of time with a person that I can best describe as an old friend of long standing.

With a bit of encouraging, Basil sent me a couple of stories he wrote many moons ago – written out longhand, so they go back a while - I had to dictate them into my computer to be able to satisfactorily reproduce them for FFDU. I thought our readers might like to read one or two of them, so here is the first one that made it into Word format. The topic might just be old hat to aircraft engineers like Shane and Shannon, but to us other folk with different skill sets, I'm hoping you might find it as interesting as I did.

P.S: The photographs aren't of this particular aircraft, but they suit the narrative, and lend support to Basil's words.

From Basil:

The scene is the late 1960's and I was still an "inspector without portfolio" in the airframe overhaul department at Hawker de Havilland. I had, however, been involved with the overhaul of Caribou aircraft since the early 1960's but was currently spending most of my time on a radio upgrade on an ageing C47 Dakota aircraft. This task involved the deletion of the radio operator's position so that all communication was handled from the cockpit.

One day, an RAAF truck arrived with a pair of Caribou outer wing panels, the empennage assembly, and the rear fuselage from the cargo door back. No information was received at this time as to what had happened to the aircraft, but a large dent in the leading edge of the starboard wing looked suspiciously like it had been caused by a tree.

Two days later we were alerted that the remainder of the aircraft would be on a barge at Milperra bridge at 4:00 AM the following morning and we were asked to organise a crane to unload it. I wasn't present at the unloading, but I'm told that it was quite a spectacle because after the unloading, it was found that the aircraft was too wide to fit through the gate in the airport fence, so with police escort, it was towed up Milperra road and in through the front gates at DeHavilland as they were wide enough to take it.



I arrived at work to find the aircraft sitting out on the tarmac in front of our hangar. Later that day my boss called me into the office to advise me that the logbooks for that aircraft

had arrived and that I was to look after the inspection side of the repair and reassembly of it. As a parting comment as I left to study the logbooks, he said, “make sure it goes back together straight!”

The logbooks told the story of what had happened. The aircraft had been in Vietnam carrying out a resupply mission for an army patrol and was landing at a forward supply strip currently being guarded by the patrol. The aircraft touched down and after a short landing roll, the pilot applied reverse pitch to the propellers and opened the throttles. Unfortunately, the starboard propeller didn’t reverse and the aircraft ground looped, struck a tree with the right wing, and the nose undercarriage collapsed. Subsequent investigation carried out after the accident revealed that of the two micro switches in the throttle console that controlled the propeller reversing, one had failed, and the other was out of adjustment. (*Note the two switches are in parallel and wired such that if one fails, the other will sÅll reverse the propeller to provide redundancy.*)

Getting the Caribou out of the forward supply strip posed another problem because even with the outer wings and empennage removed the upswept rear fuselage got in the way when suspended in a lifting sling below a Chinook helicopter, so they simply drilled out all the rivets around the fuselage and removed the upswept portion which enabled them to transport it piece by piece to the aircraft carrier HMAS Sydney moored not far away, and from there it was returned to Australia.

At this stage I decided to have a look at what had caused the nose undercarriage to collapse and was horrified to find that the retract jack had been replaced with a piece of 4” by 4” hardwood. The reason for this was soon obvious; the upper attachment bracket for the jack, together with a sizable piece of the surrounding structure was missing, torn out.

After positioning the aircraft in the rear corner of the hangar, jacking it up level and removing all access panels it was ready for me to commence a survey to list the various repairs and servicing that was required to be done to reassemble the aircraft and return it to service. Whilst I was inspecting the starboard main wheel well, I noticed some suspicious shadows on the web of the main spar which forms the front of the wheel well. These turned out to be diagonal ripples to the spar web and I also noticed a few rivets in the same area had lost their heads.

Access to this area was impossible from the wheel well, so I requested the removal of a large section of the wing leading edge and while this was going on I got out the rigging board and inclinometer and checked the incidence of both sides of the wing centre section just inboard of the engine nacelles. There was a 1.5-degree difference between the two, and with the leading edge removed, the full extent of the damage was soon revealed.



It was necessary to remove a section of the spar web about 60 inches long as it showed diagonal ripples and numerous rivets had their heads missing. Work started immediately on removing the damaged web and as this operation was concluding, I heard a loud “bonk” and the rigging board which had been left on top of the wing rattled. This was followed by a stream of profanity from the operator

operator because his drill bit had become jammed in the hole he was drilling, and he couldn't get it out. I grabbed hold of the trailing age and was surprised to find that it would move up and down about 1 1/2 inches. Anyhow, with me moving the trailing edge the drill came out and the few remaining rivets were removed allowing the spar web to come free. This however, prompted a number of questions about this section of wing spar:

What thickness was it? That's easy; measure it!

What specification of aluminium alloy was it?

Had it been heat treated?

Why did it appear to be two thicknesses of metal bonded together?

At this point I rang the engineering department and asked what technical data they had on Caribou main spars and the reply was that they held a full set of the manufacturers drawings on microfilm and said I could view them at any time. Off I went to spend the first of many hours searching through rolls of microfilm looking through a viewer until I eventually I found what I wanted; the gauge of the material, its specification, heat treatment level, and the type of epoxy used to bond the two layers together.

I just added all this information to my survey sheets and left it to the planning office to order up all the required materials. Work on the spar repair stopped while the two bonded sheets of metal were made up by the fibreglass shop, so repair of the damage in the nose wheel well commenced. The repairs required were covered by a drawing issued for a similar incident previously, and this allowed us to proceed in that area.

About this time my boss asked how I was going to check the rear portion of the fuselage when they refitted it. I had already given that some thought and proposed to drop a plumb bob from the aircraft centre line to the floor at the front of the fuselage and at the front of the cargo door, then extend this line back to a point below the rudder hinge brackets.As the rudder hinge line was vertical, I then proposed to drop a plumb bob down through the hinge brackets to the centreline on the floor. "Sounds OK to me" said the boss, "go ahead with it," so once more it was back to the microfilms to find components with the aircraft centreline dimensions either from an edge, or from the tooling holes. The rear end proved quite easy, as I found a couple of tooling holes equidistant from the centre line, but the front of the fuselage took a lot more research until I finally found reference to the centreline on the structure of a servicing hatch just aft of the nose wheel well.

Back at the aircraft I duly marked the centre line in both spots and with a plumb bob transferred them to the floor. Because this line would have to remain right on the floor for a number of weeks, a long strip of paper was taped to the floor and the centreline drawn on it. Then they had to make up lifting slings and adjust them so that the front was vertical when suspended from the monorail crane in the centre of the hanger. Next, with the aid of a mobile crane it was time to refit the rear fuselage, but first, we had to fit the upper fin because this contained two of the rudder hinge brackets. The rear fuselage was carefully moved into position, the rivet holes were aligned, and a large number of skin pins were fitted into the rivet holes.

I was called to drop the plumb bob down the hinge brackets, and this showed us that the rudder was leaning one way. The skin pins were removed and a few hefty shoves on the side of the fin got it vertical, but the rivet holes no longer aligned.We drilled the rivet holes out 1/32" oversize in several places and more skin pins were fitted. The slings were removed, and it stayed vertical, so the sheet metal workers went flat-out drilling out the holes and putting in every 4th rivet. There was no way they were going to complete the task that day but at least the fuselage was back together and straight.

Several days later when all of the rivets had been fitted, I rechecked with a plumb bob and the rudder hinge line was still vertical.

By now the rather expensive bonded metal for the spar web had arrived so that it was back to the spar repair. By putting a screw Jack under the trailing edge, it was possible to adjust the starboard wing incidents to match the port wing and so it was in this manner the new spar web was drilled off from the old rivet holes and then rivetted in position. On removal of the screw jack, the incident remained unchanged, and while the leading edge was being refitted, a couple other sheet metal workers were repairing the damaged leading edge of the starboard outer wing. It was a relatively simple task of removing all the damaged parts and replacing them with new parts supplied so no new parts had to be manufactured.

The aircraft was reaching the stage where it had to go back together and I was starting to wonder how this bunch of sheet metal workers were going to handle that task, but fortunately it was agreed that the normal 'E' servicing crew would work on the aircraft during overtime and would be available to help out for short periods at other times, and this worked quite well. It all went more quickly than I expected because it occurred while an 'E" servicing aircraft was in the engine run and flight stage, so at no time where we short of experienced workers. They certainly kept me busy with inspection tasks, but finally it was time to do the control rigging and movement checks.

Part of this inspection involves taking measurements from the nose to both wing tips from the wing tips the trailing edge of the rudder and while engaged in this task I remembered seeing the same dimension in the front of the logbook recorded immediately after manufacture. Comparison of these figures with what we recorded revealed with the aircraft was now straighter that when it came out of the factory, a fact that I took great delight in informing my boss.

It was now time for the airworthiness inspection, engine runs, compass calibration and preparation for test flights. The great day came and carried out a preflight inspection and took the certificate of safety for flight to the test pilots office and hand it to Ted Shaw, or our chief test pilot. He remarked", you've been on the ship since day one, haven't you?" I said yes, and he then said, "would you like to come with me on the first test flight?" Naturally I accepted expecting to ride in the cabin, but no, Ted wanted me in the right-hand seat up front in the cockpit. He was no doubt aware that had racked up a number of hours in full size gliders.

At this point I should point out that Caribou aircraft are usually flown with two pilots. Put simply, one pilot doesn't have enough hands. During take-off the first pilot has his feet on the rudder pedals, his right hand on the throttles, and his left hand on the nose steering wheel. The second pilot holds the control column. A Caribou doesn't rotate nose up to lift off the runway but becomes airborne with the nose level, so you never really know exactly when it becomes airborne. Should it drop a wing immediately after take-off it is the second pilot's job to correct it, and only when there is a significant distance between the aircraft and the ground, does the first pilot release the nose wheel steering, select undercarriage up, and then take hold of the control column.It was my job to



keep the wings level and to stop any tendency for the nose to rise. Fortunately, none of this happened and the Caribou settled into a ”hands-off” climb.

There were a few minor defects arising from that test flight, but nothing that could not be fixed in a few minutes. A further test flight to adjust the lift computers that controlled the stick shakers and to check the stall speed in various flap configurations should have seen it ready for delivery but no, the engineering department wanted to put wool tufts all over the wing centre and mount a video camera on the fin to observe the air flow over the wing just prior to an actual stall. This took a day or two to set up then once more I went along for the ride, but in the cabin this time, because when carrying out stall test on a Caribou it is necessary to move the centre of gravity aft to the rear of the operational limit. This is usually accomplished by taking a couple of passengers in the cabin, seating them up forward for the take-off and at the rear for the stalls.

During stalls, the tailplane stalls first creating quite a bit of shaking in the rear fuselage which makes gaps appear around the cargo door. I had seen it all before, but my fellow passenger was not at all impressed. The eery thing is that although aircraft is stalled, it is nose level and descending at about 1500 feet per minute and, the ailerons continue to be effective. Each stall was followed by a full power climb back up to the starting height which gets a bit noisy in the cabin. The noise level on cruise is much more subdued.

Anyhow after about 8 stalls it was back to Bankstown to remove the video camera and the wool cuffs and prepare the aircraft for delivery.

I'm not certain of the registration number of this Caribou but I think it might have been A 4-220 or A4 - 224. Some years later when I was in the planning office, I became involved in a VIP fit out for a Caribou so that could be second number that springs to mind.

Postscript:

About 40 years later I was to meet David Murrell who was responsible for the dismantling of this aircraft while serving with the RAAF in Vietnam; he is currently the secretary of the model aero club to which I belong. After relocation to Australia, the aircraft was eventually withdrawn from service with the RAAF and is currently still airworthy in the good hands of the Historic Aircraft Restoration Society at Albion Park in New South Wales, where it is flown quite regularly.

A LINK TO THE OLD DAYS OF THE AFFS

Warren Leadbeatter tells me "*I found this website with archives of old websites. I stumbled across this AFFS website from back in 2008. I thought you might want to check it out. It has a report about the first Ấme they went to Narrandera in 2000. It is pretty slow and not all pages, pics and pdfs are there unfortunately.*"

https://web.archive.org/web/20080413055055/http://www.ausfreeflightplans.org/affs/index.php

ED: I suspect Vin is also a pretty successful custodian of OLD FFDUs

VALE John Lamont

28 January 2026

It is with great sadness that we share the news of the passing of John Lamont over the recent long weekend.John was a long-time and highly respected scale modeller in both RC and control line flying. His contributions to the sport were significant and far-reaching. In 2002, he proudly represented Australia at the FAI World Championships in Canada. Through his publication, Australian Model News, John provided valuable insights into the modelling community here in Australia—reaching readers both locally and internationally. John was a regular competitor at numerous local events and scale competitions, and he also dedicated his time in leadership roles, serving as President of the Victorian Scale Flying Aircraft Association, now known as the Australian Scale Aerosports (ASA). On behalf of the ASA, we extend our heartfelt condolences to John's family and friends. We thank him for his passion, his service, and his lasting contributions to the sport we all love.

Thank you, John.

You will be greatly missed.

Written by Alex Butler for the VMAA and "Flypaper".

VALE Allen Thomas

Trevor Allen Thomas (known as Allen) was born in 1930 and passed away on Friday 13th February 2026, aged 95.

This is a brief summary of his life as an aeromodeller.Allen used to visit the popular Swift Model Aircraft shop from an early age and this is where at age 18 he attended a meeting to form a Brisbane model aero club.Allen was elected President. Soon after its registration with the MAAA as the Brisbane Model Aero Club, they were contacted by the MAAA saying, while there were many active clubs throughout Queensland, it would be best for Brisbane to be the central location to establish a State controlling body.

Following instructions from the national body, the new club was duly called the Model Aeronautical Association of Queensland (MAAQ). So, Allen was the first president of the MAAQ. They staged the first Queensland State Championships in 1949 at Wacol in BrisbaneThere was one international free flight event that was of significance and this event (Wakefield) was sponsored by the Courier Mail. Allen Thomas won the event and went on to win twice after that, in successive years. Allen was also the first and only Queenslander to attend the 3rd Nationals held in Victoria in 1950.

Eventually the MAAQ was reformed as a purely administrative body, with elected executives.The members of the original MAAQ became the Brisbane Free Flighters.

In 1951, the 4th Nationals were held in Adelaide and Des Slattery of the NMAA club became the first Queenslander to compete in the Nationals and place in a Nationals event. Locally, the 3rd Queensland State Champs were held where Allen won the Courier Mail Cup for the third time.Also in 1951, the national body made the wise decision to move the Nationals from the Easter weekend to the period between Christmas and the New Year, to accommodate the growing number of model classes. So in 1951, the 5th Nationals were held at Camden NSW after Christmas, with a number of Queenslanders attending.

Queensland hosted the 7th Nationals so this was to be a big year for the MAAQ and the Arthur Gorrie-led committee choose Toowoomba as the site, with free flight at the town's aerodrome and control line at the local showgrounds. Accommodation for visitors was in bunks in the various animal sheds. These were normally only used at show time! There was one significant event more important than all the others, and it was a non-flying event. The MAAA would at last be issuing MAAA registration members to all flyers. Prior to this, members would adorn their models with their club initials followed by a number. Well-known NSW flyer Ivor F (previously known as Ivor Stowe) deserved the credit for getting this to happen, and he was awarded number 1 for his effort. The way the numbers were issued for all flyers attending was quite novel, being made up the animal shed number and their bunk number. Members now had their official FAI approved "Competitor's Licence". The numbers had a "VH" prefix and that was later replaced with an "AUS" prefix, as more flyers attended overseas competitions.

At the Queensland Nats, Allen befriended another Queenslander Bond Baker who went on to be the second Australian to win at a World Championship, flying Wakefield in 1958 (Alan Baker won in 1954). It would be 55 years before another Australian would win at the World Championships (Roy Summersby, 2013 World Champs F1C, France).

Allen's local flying results were excellent, winning the Wakefield event at the 1954 Queensland State Champs again at Amberley – six wins in a row. Allen returned to flying after a family break and was instrumental in securing a new flying field at Wivenhoe Pocket in the 1990s, a field that was used for 19 years. He also associated with Ron Morrison who ran an Indoor Free Flight night at Nudgee College. This was a very popular event where over 20 flyers would compete with small lightweight rubber models and balsa gliders on Friday nights.

In 1997 Allen was appointed the President of the Brisbane Free Flight Society, as the club was now known.In the 1990s and into the 2000s, Allen continued to travel south for the big free flight events at Dubbo and Narrandera but eventually settled for local competitions, both indoor and outdoor.

In 2006, he generously promoted an annual event for the older Wakefield design that he so much loved, putting up thousands of dollars over the five years the event was conducted. It was promoted as "Australia's Richest Free Flight event" and was enjoyed by all who flew in it. He previously sponsored his favourite rubber event with a $1,000 in cash prizes at the 1999 Nationals at Toowoomba and Oakey, where he helped as CD, judge and timekeeper. He last attended free flight competitions in 2013. In the same year he was awarded life membership to the BFFS, and is the club's only Life Member.

Allen was an integral part of a solid free flight presence in Australia, a significant founding member of the early MAAQ, a true gentleman and a great friend to all of us. He will be long remembered.

Malcolm Campbell
Secretary, BFFS Inc
AUS 52060

Engines and models for sale by the NSWFFS

As at 8th March 2026

Legend

NIB new in box
NNIB near new in box
GC good condition
W/M with muffler
C/L control line

Contact: email Roy at roydi132@optusnet.com.au or msg **0413 588 720**

Bank details: NSWFFS BSB 062 293 Acc 00901281
Add $15.50 for Express Post in AUS. International postage at cost
Can accept Pay Pal through Roy Summersby

All prices are negotiable

MODELS

Model	Approx Span	Engine	Price ONO
SE5a	1250 mm	OS 52 Surpass	350
Precedent	2400 mm	SC 91 4/S	300
Space	1850 mm	OS 40 H	90
Three tow line gliders	Different sizes	Can be made electric. 2 servos in each	70 ea

DIESEL MOTORS

ID	Description	$ Price
2	AM 1.5 VG no spray bar	40
3	AM 1.5 VG	50
4	Sparey. 5,00 cc Diesel 1946 no build history as new	150
5	Sparey. 5.00 cc Diesel 1946 built by G. Potter as new	150
8	Mills 1.3 GC no tank	100
10	Mills .75 GC	100
11	Mills 1.3 in original box VG 1947	135
12	Redfin Mini Bee NIB	170
14	Russian Elfin 1.5 Ivor numbered 202 NNIB	80
17	Russian Elfin 1.5 Ivor numbered	80
18	Deezel Repo 2.0 (CS) ?	80
20	Super Atom 1.8 Czech repo VG	100
21	N.V. 2.1 Ser 1 VG	1
22	DC Merlin .76 G	60
23	DC Merlin .76 G	60
24	ED Racer R/C	70
25	Silver Sallow 2.5 G	70
34	Taipan 1.5 early Mk 2 poor ext	50

2 stroke GLOW MOTORS

ID	Description	$ Price
30	Super Tiger 45 GC NN Boxed	60
31	Super Tiger 2300 L/New in Box	200
33	Fox 45 RC W/M NIB	80
34	Testers 40 N/N Boxed	50
35	Enya 35 C/L G. W/M Boxed	50
36	Enya SS 40 GC W/M Boxed	50
37	Enya SS 40 GC W/M Boxed	50
40	Enya 49X GC	50
41	Enya 29 RC VG W/M	70
42	EnyaSS30 RC VG W/M	70
43	Frog 500 With Tank VG	75
45	OS 40 FP Diesel/Glow W/M & bits bxd	120
46	OS 46 LA Blue W/M GC Boxed	80
47	OS AX GC W/M	120
48	OS 55 AX GC No Muffler	70
49	OS MAX 45 VGC No Muffler	70
50	OS 19 parts C/L	20
51	OS 40 H Ex G. Potter with tank	70
52	OS 40 FP RC VG	70
53	OS 40LA GC Blue	50
54	OS 25 GC RC	50

DIESEL MOTORS

ID	Description	$ Price
35	Taipan 1.5 BR Rare, Series 70 VG	200
41	Taipan Tyro 1.9 G but rough ext	60
42	Taipan Tyro 1.9 G	80
50	ED Bee G, Comp no tank	50
51	Sparey. 5.00 cc Diesel 1946 built by G. Potter as new	150
52	Taipan 2.5 Mk5	80
53	Sesqui 1.5 Near New	300

2 stroke GLOW MOTORS

ID	Description	$ Price
55	ASP 40 GC W/M	50
56	ASP 108 GC W/M	100
57	Thunder Tiger Pro 46 GC W/M Boxed	100
58	Thunder Tiger Pro 46 GC No muffler	50
60	Cox NIB 049 Medalion W/M	100
64	Cox Baby Bee	25

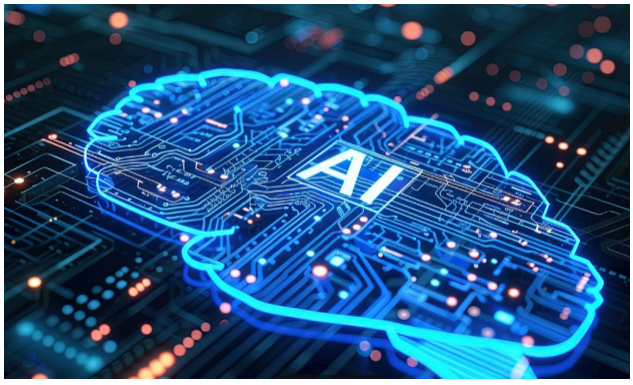
4 Stroke MOTORS

ID	Description	$ Price
1	OS 120 Surpass Pumped VGC	300
2	OS 70 Surpass VG W/M	250
3	OS 91 Surpass GC W/M Broken Throttle Arm Boxed	200
4	OS 120 Surpass VGC	200
5	OS FS 40 GC W/M	150
6	OS FS 40 GC W/M	150
7	OS FS 40GC W/M Boxed	150
8	OS FS 20 VGC W/M Boxed	350
9	OS 120 Surpass NIB	390
10	OS 60 four stroke open rocker	150
12	Enya 60-4C VGC	200
13	Enya 53-4C GC	150
14	Enya 90-4c GC W/M	200
15	Enya 60 -4c VGC	200
16	Enya 53 -4C GC W/M	150
17	Saito 62a VGC early type W/M Boxed	150

4 Stroke MOTORS

ID	Description	$ Price
18	Saito 65 VGC No Muffler	100
19	Saito FA65 GC No Muffler Boxed	150
20	Saito FA 30 Open Rocker VGC L/New W/M Boxed	400
21	Saito 120 GC	350
22	Saito 120 VGC W/M	400
23	Saito 50VGC W/M	150
24	ASP 52 VG W/M Boxed	120
25	ASP 91 VGC W/M No Needle	150
26	Magnum 120 VGC W/M	300
27	RCV 58 As New W/M in Box	300
28	OS 60 Open Rocker VG (Texaco set up)	250
29	OS FS 61 GC (Texaco set up)	150
30	OS O/R 60 VGC	200
31	OS FS 61 W/M GC	150
32	OS FS 48 W/M CG Boxed	120
33	Saito FA 30 O/R VGC Boxed	350

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



Well, did that get your attention? Some have embraced AI, some are wary, and others wish it doesn't start WWIII. Well, our resident techno-geek and AFFS President Warren Leadbeatter has written an article on it that my just help you come to grips with it.

But you will have to wait until the June Edition of FFDU because we are full up for March. And if you have anything you want to tell us, send your contributions early, rather than swamp me in the last week. It always happens, but it shouldn't.

15th "HEAVE HO" Free Flight Glider International Postal held over the period 1 April until 30 April 2026

Sponsored by stingmk2gliders.com (outdoor events) and J&H Aerospace (indoor events).

Indoor catapult and hand launch gliders for both adults and Juniors (age up to 15 years old) flown in category 1 (ceiling height up to 8 meter or 26' measured under the ceiling beam structure excluding lights and fans. Basketball halls are common category 1 sites). I have asked Josh Finn from J&H AEROSPACE to again sponsor prizes for indoor, Josh sells lots of indoor glider kits so check out his range.

Outdoor events, Juniors and adults:

1. Hand Launch (javelin) HLG (Heave Ho Perpetual trophy to adult winner)
2. Catapult CLG (1/16" x 1/4" x 9" rubber loop maximum allowed)
3. Tip Launch Glider TLG.

Indoor events for Juniors and adults:

1. 6" (152mm) wing span catapult, any design (Sting Mk2 6" glider kit ideal)
2. Hand launch, any size or material and can be wing tip or Javelin launched.

RULES:

- For indoor and outdoor there are 9 official flights. Please record all official flights with the best 5 counted for outdoor (multiple series of 9 flights are allowed but cannot mix or combine scores.)
- Times to be recorded by a time keeper. For Outdoor fly to one minute maximum for each flight. If you achieve 5 x one-minute maxes out of 9 then keep flying one-minute maxes till it is missed but include that last flight time.
- Flights are rounded down to seconds. Indoor flights are recorded down to 1/10th second. (eg flight of 23.76 seconds is recorded as 23.7 seconds).
- Time starts at moment of launch and stops when glider comes to rest on floor. Best 3 scores will count or 4th if needed as a tie breaker.

STING MK2 glider kits for prizes and lucky entry prize. Fly safely & responsibly but most of all "Have FUN"

ENTRY is FREE Send results and your country to lensurtees@hotmail.com (scores must be emailed by 14th May). Please check out web site for updated information at stingmk2gliders.com

Happy flying to all, Len Surtees



WANTED

1.FORA or VE Geared F1C engine. This is intended for an Open Power Model so it needs to be a good reliable engine but not necessarily a 'Best in Class' screamer.

2.Two or three F1C Carbon Fibre Booms as spares for the inevitable.

Please contact me at garypope_kw@hotmail.com or on 0417 268 478.

AustralianFreeFlightSocietyInc

A Special Interest Group of the Model Aircraft Association of Australia

2025-26 COMMITTEE MEMBERS AFFS INC

PRESIDENT
Warren Leadbeatter: 0408 801 539
warrenlead@gmail.com



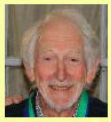
SECRETARY
Natalie Beckett: 0402 675 037
natbeckett82@icloud.com



VICE PRESIDENT
Andrew Linwood: 0416 214 423
ajlinwoodbuilder@outlook.com



TREASURER
Vin Morgan 0439 632 954
vinmorgan2@gmail.com



EDITOR –
Free Flight Down Under
Malcolm Campbell 0417 774 826
actrain@ozemail.com.au





SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR FUTURE EDITIONS OF FFDU:



1. Show us your workbench
2. What is your favourite motor, with photo
3. Send in your aeromodelling profile, with photos
4. Recent builds or repairs
5. Competition reports
6. Handy Hints
7. New products, useful supply outlets
8. What's good about free flight, and what's not
9. Anything about electricity in free flight
10. Wanted and For Sale items

FREE FLIGHT DOWN UNDER

DEADLINE CUT-OFF DATES

- Last day of February for the March edition
- Last day of May for the June edition
- Last day of August for the September edition
- Last day of November for the December edition

Don't wait until the last day, sometimes we close off early.

We always need articles for each edition of Free Flight Down Under

My first FFDU March 2010



JOKES PAGE

Just found out there's no popcorn in popcorn shrimp. Guess there's no reason to try pot roast.

My teacher told me not to worry about spelling because in the future there will be autocorrect And for that I am eternally grapefruit.

I burned 3,000 calories yesterday. That's the last time I take a nap while brownies are in the oven.

Do y'all remember, before the internet, that people thought the cause of stupidity was the lack of access to information? Yeah. It wasn't that.





I think it's disgraceful that after 50 years, people don't know who Neil Armstrong is, or the type of trumpet he played

By replacing your morning coffee with green tea, you can lose up to 87% of what little joy you still have left in your life.



Baby Boomers will get this 🤣😂
Too Funny!!





Last night, my wife asked me if I'd seen the dog bowl. I said, "I didn't know he could."

NSW FREE FLIGHT CONTEST CALENDAR 2026 V1

Date	Event	Venue	Time	CD
January 11	½ Scramble and Combined % BBQ – BYO food	Richmond	7:00am – 12:00pm	Roy Summersby
January 16	General Meeting	Dundas Sports	7:30pm	
February 8	P30 State champs and Combined Vintage	Richmond	7:00am – 12:00pm	Peter Scott
February 22	Unorthodox Day, Abomination Mass Launch and Scale Rally BBQ – BYO food	Richmond	8:00am -12:00pm	Michael Towell
March 7 - 8	Hunter Valley Championships CL & FF	Muswellbrook	See program	See program
March 15	1 hr Scramble State Champs and Combined % BBQ – BYO food	Richmond	7:00am – 12:00pm	Roy Summersby
March 20	General Meeting	Dundas Sports	7:30pm	
April 12	E36 State Champs and Combined Vintage	Richmond	7:00am – 12:00pm	Michael Towell
April 26 - 30	AFFS Champs + Widgiewa Cup (World Cup Events) + Southern Cross Cup for F1A, B and C	Narrandera	See program	See program
May 1 - 3	AFFS continued at WW – 1st Combined Vintage, E36, P30 – 2nd F1 G, H, J, % & Scramble – 3rd Open Power, Open Rubber, HLG, TLG & CLG – See FFDU - Evening Presentation Dinner	West Wyalong	See program	See program
May 16 - 17	Muswellbrook Veterans Gathering	Muswellbrook	See program	See program
May 22	General Meeting	Dundas Sports	7:30pm	
May 30 – June 1	F1ABC State champs + Open Rubber/Power State Champs + Victorian State Champs for F1ABC	West Wyalong	See program	See program
June 14	Combined F1G, H and J State champs and Combined %	Richmond	7:00am – 12:00pm	Gary Pope
July 3 - 5	Trans Tasman Scale Rally + CL Scale (Fri to Sun) + 1 hr Scramble and Fun Fly BBQ – BYO food	Richmond	7:00am -12:00pm	Phil Warren Michael Towell
July 17	General Meeting	Dundas Sports	7:30pm	
July 25 - 26	Mid Winter Mini Maxout 2min max models (5 flights per day)	West Wyalong	See program	See Program
August 9	Combined Vintage State Champs & Combined %	Richmond	7:00am – 12:00pm	Gary Goodwin
August 29-30	Cowra Oily Hand Weekend	Cowra MAC	See program	See program
September 6	½ hr Scramble and Scale Rally BBQ – BYO food	Richmond	7:00am – 12:00pm	Roy Summersby
September 18	General Meeting & AGM	Dundas Sports	7:30pm	
September 27	HLG/CLG State champs and Combined Vintage	Richmond	7:00am – 12:00pm	Nat Beckett
October 11	Ebenezer Day and George Fuller Event BBQ – BYO Food	Richmond	7:00am – 12:00pm	Michael Towell
October 23 - 29	75th Free Flight Nationals	West Wyalong	See program	See program
November 8	Precision Power (sport models)	Richmond	7:00am – 12:00pm	Nat Beckett
November 20	General Meeting	Dundas Sports	7:30pm	
November 21	Presentation Dinner	See invite	5pm	
November 27	Friday Xmas Party	Richmond	7:00am-12:00pm	Michael - Lyn
December 6	½ hr Scramble + Christmas Party BBQ – BYO Food	Richmond	7:00am-12:00pm	Michael Towell

*** NOTE: ALL SCRAMBLES START AT 8:00AM ***

BRISBANE FREE FLIGHT SOCIETY

2026 Flying Calendar

Month	Date	StartEvents		Location
February	Sat 21st	12-4pm	Bar-B-Que lunch & General MeeŠng	John's place
March	Sat 7th	3-6 pm	**Indoor** – Delta Dart	BSSHSS
	Sun 8th	8-12pm	Club Day 2 min class models/trimming	Coominya
	Sun 22nd	8-2pm	F1H State Champs (5 flights) and E36 club event (3 flights)	Coominya
April	Sat 11th	3-6pm	**Indoor** - EZB	BSHS
	Sun 26th	8-12pm	Trimming / Reserve Day	Coominya
	Sun 26th to	3rd May	AFFS State Champs & Southern Cross Cup Narrandera and W-	Wyalong
May	Sun 3rd	8-12pm	F1G State Champs (5 flights)	Coominya
	Sat 9th	3-6pm	**Indoor** - HLG/.CLG	BSHS
	Sat 16th	8-1pm	F1A State Champs(5 rounds, R1 240 secs)	Dalby
	Sun 17th	8-1pm	F1B State Champs(5 rounds, R1 240 secs)	Dalby
	Sun 24th	8-12pm	Trimming / Reserve Day	Coominya
	Sat 30th	8-1pm	Reserve F1A	Dalby
	Sun 31st	8-1pm	Reserve F1B	Dalby
June	Sun 7th	8-12pm	Reserve day	Coominya
	Sat 13th	3-6pm	**Indoor** - Hanger Rat	BSHS
	Sun 14th	8-1pm	Club Fun Day including P29 and ½ hour Walking Scramble	Coominya
	Sat 27th	12-4pm	Bar-B-Que and AGM	John's place
July	Sat 4th	3-6pm	**Indoor** - P18	BSHS
	Sun 12th	8-1pm	Scale State Champs and tesŠng	Coominya
	Sun 26th	8-1pm	Fun Fly and tesŠng day including E36	Coominya
August	Sun 8th	3-6pm	**Indoor** – Peanut Scale	BSHS
	Sun 9th	8-1pm	Mini Power and QDP (each 3 flights)	Coominya
	Sun 23rd	8-1pm	E36 State Champs (5 flights)	Coominya
September	Sun 13th	8-12pm	P30 State Champs (3 flights)	Coominya
	Sun 27th	8-1pm	F1ttState Champs (5 flights)	Coominya
October	Sun 11th	8-1pm	HLG, TLG & CLG State Champs	Coominya
	Sun 25th	8-1pm	100gm coupe and A1 Glider (each 3 flights)	Coominya
November	Sun 1st	8-1pm	Reserve day	Coominya
	Sun 15th	8-1pm	Col's Vintage and RC assist Sports model Rally	Coominya
December	Sat 5th	12-4pm	Christmas Party and prize presentaŠon	John's place

FIRST DUTY OF THE KEYMASTER ON FLYING DAYSText Jesse 0417 077 781 "*BFFS on the field*"

2026 FREE FLIGHT CALENDAR **Ver 1 as at 11 November 2025**