

A Few Words from the Current President

It is with great pleasure that I can present to you the Celebration of 50 Years of Continuous Operations in the Bundaberg Region by the Bundaberg Gliding Club.

The history of how the club started from merger beginnings on a strip near Monduran Station to then migrate to the current air strip at Elliott Field is contained in the pages to follow.

We believe this will help consolidate the clubs past and honour those who established and have been part of the Bundaberg Gliding Club over the last fifty years.

Without members' drive and enthusiasm to fly the Bundaberg Gliding Club would not survive. This celebration is therefore dedicated to the many members of the community who have given and continue to give of their time and effort to keep this great facility operating.

In my short eight years with the club we have seen several setbacks but the club has rebound every time to keeps its doors open. We have seen and increase in helping groups of young people like the Australian Air Force Cadets and Australian Air League to get into the air and experience.

With a new club glider purchase this year, well kept grounds and buildings, I think the Bundaberg Gliding Club has established a wonderful facility at the Elliott Airstrip. My wish is the Bundaberg Gliding Club can continue on its operations for another fifty years.

I hope you enjoy the story and pictures that have been compiled in this small publication.

Safe Flying.

Kindest Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Grant Davies', with a large, stylized initial 'G'.

Grant Davies
President
Bundaberg Gliding Club (2015)

THE EARLY YEARS

The First Days

The early history of the Bundaberg Gliding Club really began after Sel Hewitt had recovered from desperately wanted to fly so he decided to buy some plans of an aircraft and built the Benson Gyrocopter. After spending weeks practicing simulated flying by sitting in the gyrocopter seat holding a bar that came down from the rotor head of the Benson, Sel managed to balance the gyros airframe with all four wheels off the floor. At this stage he decided some real landing practice was call for so he took up some flying lessons at the Bundaberg Aero club.

In those early days it was illegal to put an engine in a gyrocopter. Because of this, towing was the only option. However, being towed up and down Coonar beach behind a car was less exciting then flying fixed wing aircraft. He sold the gyrocopter and continued to fly with the Bundaberg Aero club where he made some friends including Charlie Dean. Chas had a private pilot's licence and he and Sel spent many happy days flying together in the club's Tiger Moth doing all sorts of aerobatics.

One day they were invited to the Kingaroy Gliding Club's open day. They were both greatly impressed with gliding and thought just how much more flying and value for money could be obtained from this more adventurous form of flying. Consequently, Sel spent many weekends at the Kingaroy Gliding Club becoming a proficient glider pilot. He had gained second place to Ingo Renner who was the current Australian and World champion glider pilot at the time, in what was the first Queensland gliding championships. Sel later attended a training course at Kingaroy and received his accreditation as a gliding flight instructor. Now, together with Chas Dean a very competent private pilot and Sel, now a gliding flight instructor, the seed had been sown for the formation of the Bundaberg Gliding Club. In very little time the seed sprung into life and together with Bernie Sainsbury and George Mooring, plans were formulated to have the first Bundaberg Gliding Club off the ground and into the air.

This founding four, Chas, Sel, Bernie and George now had much work to do. First of all, where to have an airstrip? Sel got in touch with a Mr Richard Apel, who had his own private plane and also owned cattle properties, and yes he was only too happy to let a goodly portion of his property at Tararan, fifteen miles (24kms) north of Gin Gin as a glider strip for the newly formed gliding club. The founding four then spent several months of weekends altering the fencing to give a fledging club at least 3000 feet of airstrip. This entailed digging out stumps and picking up sticks. The Kolan Shire council also sent out a grader to do levelling and the strip was ready. You cannot

have a gliding club without a glider and some way to launch it! So something had to be done about this. A Kookaburra two seater glider was located in Adelaide. With the loan of a trailer from the Kingaroy gliding club, Sel, with his wife Evelyn and daughter Wendy, set off in their little Morris 1100. The drive to Adelaide to buy the Kooka was long and hard. Once the Hewitt crew were back in Bundaberg complete with their £850 beauty, the job of building a trailer became necessary so the Kingaroy trailer could be returned.

Another way a glider gets airborne is to winch it up on a cable. Chas Dean was a partner in JD Motors at the time and he was able to coax a farmer into making a donation of a Fargo truck. On this truck would sit the winch and Chas who did all the brain work and with the help of a few more donations, the winch, glider, trailer and airstrip were ready for the big day. It is worth noting that in the early days of the club Jack Vishoud of Fixits donated hardware to the club in the form of cars, vans and auto parts and Alf from Fixits continues to do this today.

The weekend before the official opening, Keith Wright chief flying instructor for Queensland and a few other members of the strong Kingaroy club went up to Tararan, inspected proposed operation and then Keith test flew the Kooka. On landing, Keith, who had a dry sense of humour made a comment about how none of the instruments worked and he flew by the seat of his pants. This minor problem was soon fixed however on the next launch the winch packed it in. Back to Bundaberg and the drawing board but Chas Dean would have already known what the problem was. He was an A grade mechanic and had already told the other three of the founding four that the star gears in the diff would have to be welded up. The problem of course was that the star and planetary gears were never meant to be spinning like they would have been as in a car that is bogged with one of the drive wheels held tight and the other allowed to spin freely. Chas knew this, welded these gears of the differential up and the winch gave sterling service for a long time.

All this work to date, took approximately 12 months and during this time the founding four, were also doing extra-curricular work, such as helping Bernie with his well boring to supplement the club's meagre funds. Of course, the ambition of the four was to build a hangar for the glider at the airstrip. The final weekend of November 1965 all was set for the grand opening. The Bundaberg gliding club got off the ground with 25 flights ranging from 5 minute flights up to an hour. The airstrip was parallel with the Bruce Highway and on and off all day cars were stopping to watch the action going on at the new flying club. Besides the sole instructor there were three other

members who had some gliding time and several power pilots who also wanted to experience this great sport.

Prices were set at 7 shillings and 6 pence per launch, 30 shillings per hour for members and for non-members, 1 shilling per minute. The organisers were very happy with their efforts in getting the club up and going without any public appeal for finance. When it came time to acquire a single seater aircraft 2 or 3 members guaranteed a loan from the bank and a narrow gutted Cherokee was bought from South Australia also. This was the glider used at the first Queensland comps. For almost two years the club flew from Tararan field and during this time Chas Dean had gained his instructor rating which greatly relieved the work load on Sel. With two instructors available this allowed training and cross-country flying to continue the whole time.

Every weekend that the weather was reasonable the gliders would be towed from Bundaberg to Tararan airstrip, rigged then flown all day, then de-rigged, loaded onto the trailers and back to Bundy. When the days were shorter during the winter months of 1966 and 1967 arrangements had been made to leave the gliders on many occasions around the back of the Gin Gin Hotel on the Saturday nights so the gliders only needed towing from Gin Gin to Tararan. Of course with those early club members there was a great deal of pride and joy with all who flew and accompanied them and many an "oh be joyful" was consumed at the Gin Gin Hotel. (There was no drink driving law in those days.)

On the 14th of February 1966, out go the pence and in come the cents. The way of the French and the North Americans have finally caught up with us, Australia converted to decimal currency. It was then decided to make a short flight that is basically a circuit a 1 dollar charge and a longer flight say 30-40 minutes 2 dollars and of course the hour flight became 3 dollars. This made the book keeping extremely easy as no pence or cents were involved, but human nature as it is the cents slowly crept back in.

Flying boomed during 1966 and many more pilots went solo. "Esprit de corps" was high in the club and all were "happy chappies" with several exceptions. There were about five young ladies in the club and this no doubt would have added to the male club memberships.

During the latter part of 1966 many of the members were a bit fed up with the amount of travel that had to be done. Kel Bath came over from Monto on Many Peaks road but most of them hailed from Bundaberg. This 45 minute drive out and back from Bundy could be a little taxing at times. One very keen early member Rob Baldwin used to tow the Kooka on its trailer behind his little Mini Cooper.



Sel and daughter Wendy at JD Motors 1965



Charlie on the winch at Tararan 1966



Peggy Cram going solo at Elliott field



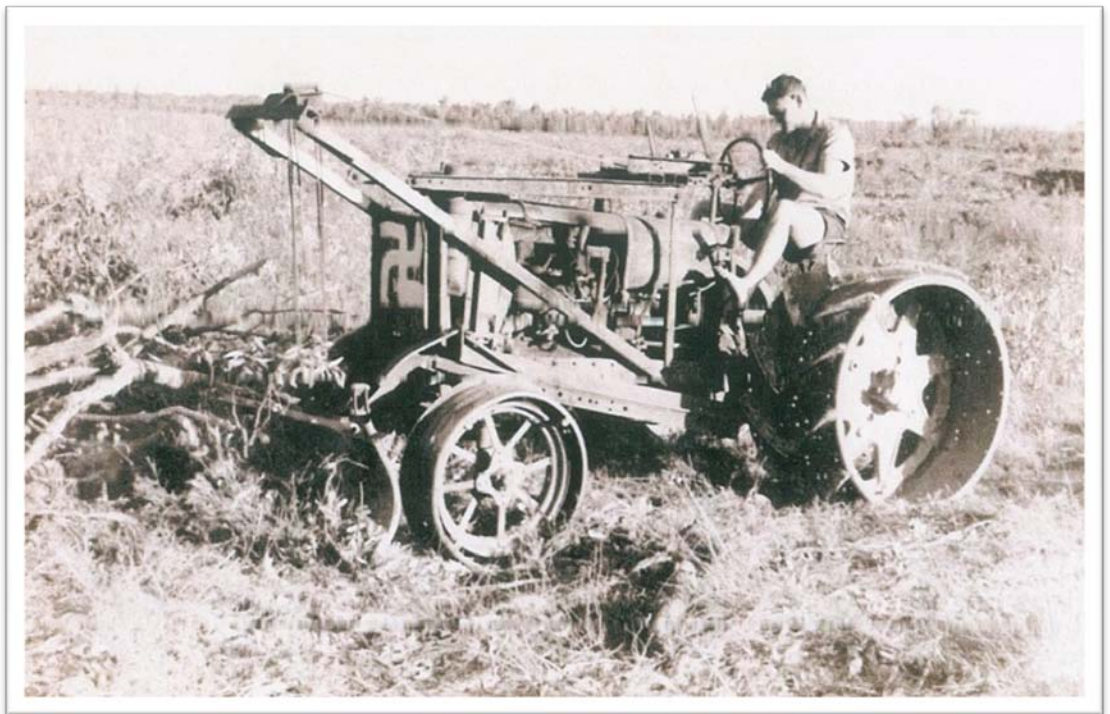
Top: Peggy Jensen and Robyn Davidson at Tararan



Kookaburra on approach for landing and 2 members getting ready for launch at Tararan.



Instructor course at Kingaroy



Ian Westmoreland clearing Elliott forestry



Elliott field almost ready



First glider flight from Elliott field



Cherokee being readied for flight at Elliott field



Sel on the way to becoming a commercial pilot



Early instructor Ross Stegert and maintenance engineers Ron McClure and John Buettel



Ross Stegert, Tom Foster and Gunther Fromel at the clubhouse Elliott field



The first 2 glass singles at Elliott field



Bevan Lane with Kookaburra



Students on the GSA Instructor Course L to R: Ian Turner (Inverell), Bert Kennett (Mt. Isa), Wally Foster (Inverell), Wally Zerwinski (Inverell), Ian Collett (Kingaroy), Charlie Dean (Bundaberg), Bruce Wilkie (Mackay), Kel. Bath (Bundaberg), Keith McLane (Inverell), Dennis Wengert (Kingaroy).
 Front: David Quim (Oakey), Glen Noble (Longreach), Stan Dwyer (Kingaroy), Keith Wright and Barry Langton.





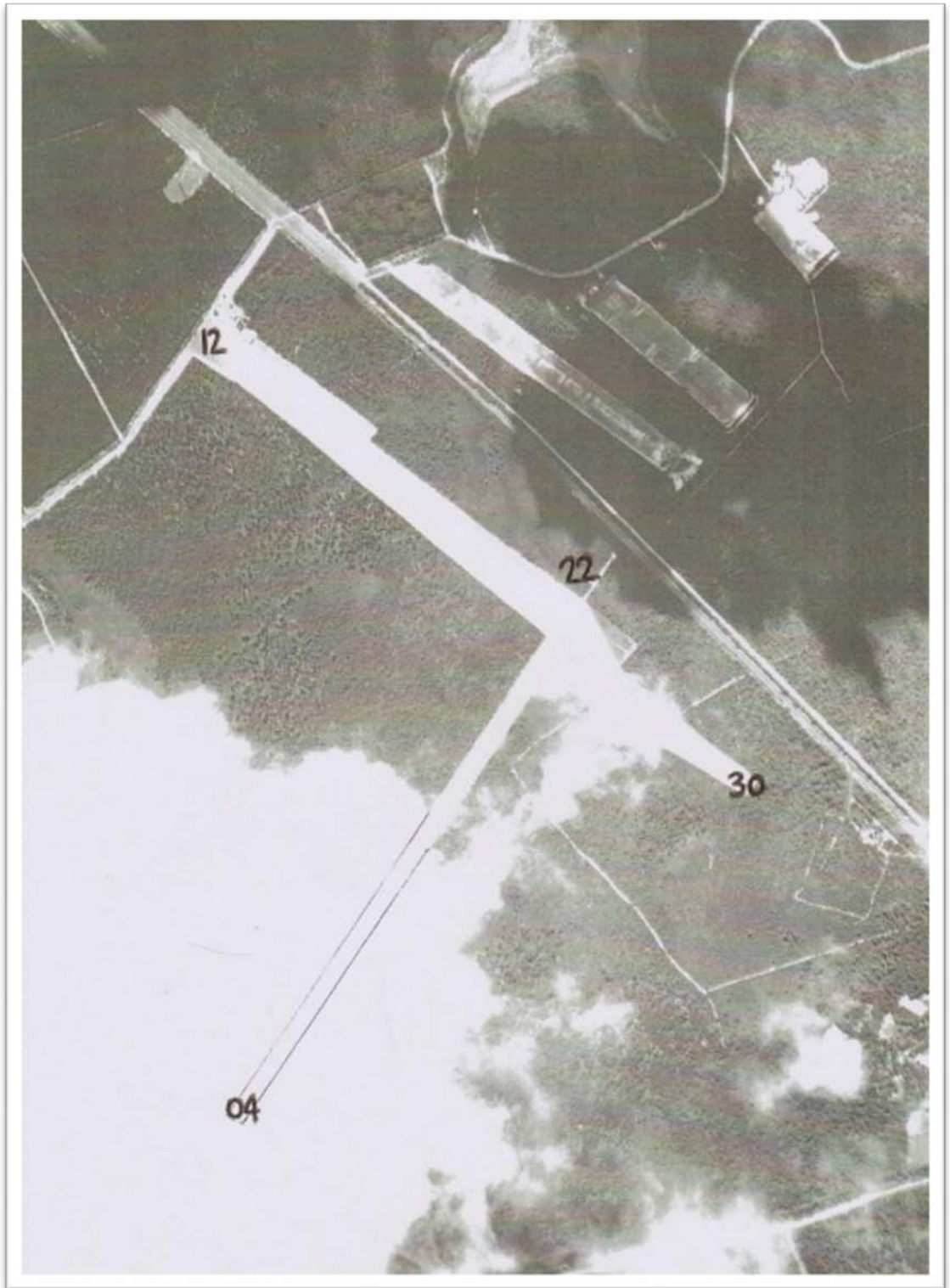
Susan and Davin Plath



Twin Astir IKV at Elliott Field



RAAF Caribou landing, taxiing and take-off at Elliott Field



Elliott Field from 8500 ft. Photo courtesy of RAAF



Unusual cloud formation and club members Chris Waterworth and Davin Plath receiving instruction from Rob Patronev on one of the minimum self-launching gliders at Barolin Rocks.



Kerry Fischer and Mike Derry



Top right: Bill Neubecker being taken for a flight by Cliff Wallace

Bottom right: Sue Derry on the winch



Paul Neville talking to Mike Derry and other guests and club members at the opening of the new hangar



Sue Derry



Hangar under construction and being opened by Bill Neubecker.



Chris Lane, Leigh Evens (CFI), Geoff Pittman and Margaret Evans, and visiting Ag. plane at Elliott field



'Oh be joyful' in the clubhouse



Club members (above) and visiting scouts (below)



Bevan Lane (CFI) at anniversary dinner watched on by Pat Dean and Ross Stegert



Members relaxing at the southern end of the strip: Cliff, Betty, Mike, Sue and John



Grant Davies (current President) First Solo in Blanik XQO.



Australian Air Force Cadets (2014)



Emma with Current CFI John Godfrey



Emma and Instructor Alan Ing.



Emma and our latest acquisition (2015) - A Grob 103 Acro - VHI

A lot of flying had been done and amazingly considering the hassles a core of keen pilots and student pilots maintained their enthusiasm. There had been no accidents or serious incidents.

The problems of distance and the amount of work eventually led to "let's find somewhere closer to have an airstrip". This is all taking place around the Christmas of 1966 and New Year 1967. The year that the Cherokee was picked up from Port Augusta. Sel Hewitt knew quite a few people who may have been able to help with this so he was asked to arrange something. Ron Clemence who was secretary of Campbell and Amos and a fellow speed boat club member, arranged a meeting with the government member who was responsible, but his response was "getting land from the forestry department is virtually impossible". You see, the members had been busy searching the Elliot River forestry which was soon to be planted with slash pine and had selected their future airstrip. Needless to say, an application for a mile long airstrip parallel with the Isis Highway went to the department, and wonder of wonders, was approved. When it was more deeply delved into as to why it was approved, the club was told that there had been so many applications from different bodies or groups that had applied to the forestry for the use of land, they had to give it to someone and so the Bundaberg Soaring Club had its first real lease of land.

The Cherokee glider was brought back from South Australia and had its first flight at the Tarara airstrip. Just as three members of the early club went to Adelaide to pick up the ES-52 (Kookaburra) from Cleve Gandy, another three members went to pick up the club's first single seat glider from the gliding club at Port Augusta. This also was trip in itself (more on this later). A Mr Noel Evans who had recently moved his land clearing business to Bundaberg was approached by the club regarding clearing part of the forestry reserve for the proposed airstrip. Incredibly, Mr Evans generously cleared the area for the airstrip free of charge; this was instrumental in keeping the club debt free. June and July of 1967 were taken up in getting the new strip ready, and on August the 6th Kookaburra VH-GFQ was launched followed by Cherokee VH-GRD. The gliding club's first flights had been achieved at Elliot River Gliding strip.

Back to collecting the Cherokee from South Australia. This happened during the early months of 1967. Clive Barret together with Rob Baldwin and Alan Ing had decided this could be their contribution to move the club a bit further along. Clive was worried about his universal joints on the tail shaft standing up to the journey to South Australia and back so Rob and Alan helped him replace these joints at Bill Moorehead's service station at the five ways in South Bundaberg. The drive to Adelaide was uneventful and almost a bee line from Bundaberg to Adelaide where Cleve Gandy lived. Alan's mum

Alma, now almost 101, was the licensee of the Melbourne Hotel in Bundaberg. She made sandwiches for the trip and Rob's mum Grace had cooked a chook for the trip also which was placed in a plastic container. The trip to Adelaide commenced at approximately 4am on Sunday Morning and the intrepid trio arrived at Cleve Gandy's place in Adelaide just before 6pm on Monday evening. They were all eating ice-creams when they arrived much to the amusement of Cleve. He inquired to the team of three as to why they had bought the single seat glider from the Port Augusta club. He said that that he could have acquired a better glider for the Bundy club at a better price. The deal with the Port Augusta club however had already been sealed.

From Adelaide the Bundy trio headed north to Port Augusta to collect the Cherokee. They were met by several of the Port Augusta club members and they all headed out to the club airfield. This airfield was a far cry for the Bundy one as it was all dust and not much grass. Clive and Alan were both solo pilots and Clive was offered a flight in the Cherokee which he turned down probably due to his prudence. The Port Augusta used single strand wire on their winch and Bundy was using multi strand wire. When the trio arrived back in Bundy it was not very long before the Bundaberg club had converted to a single strand wire also. (The one strand wire was bed spring coil wire which was a tensile steel and served the purpose extremely well). The trip back to Bundaberg was something else. Apart from the added weight of trailer and glider the length of the trailer required extra caution while towing. The return was at a slower pace than the trip down. The driving plan for the trio was one in the driver's seat for two hours then straight to the back seat for two hours then into the off side passengers seat then back behind the wheel. It was basically only a fuel stop journey down but coming home the meal stop was included with the fuel stop. (Clive was a hard task master). Back in Queensland and not far over the border, the round plastic Tupperware container is pulled up off the floor of the car. "What's in this?" The lid is popped open. Wow! The lot went out the window at the appropriate pull over. It was putrid. The trio had forgotten to eat the chook on the way down. Back in Bundy, work soon started in the first hangar which is still standing today almost 50 years later. The power was brought in from the electricity main line (A transformer had to be included as it was a single wire earth return running along the Isis Highway). Clive and Rob remained in Bundaberg but the government had nabbed Alan and he was off to do his national service in July of 1967.

Just after the advent of the new airstrip, Sel had taken work with a Mr Don Adams from Hervey Bay and he was about to become a commercial pilot flying for Island Air. Sel left the club in the very capable hands of Chas Dean

who went on to become the gliding club's longest serving chief flying instructor. The early days continued at a great pace, many people became members and the club grew with strength.

The Elliot Gliding Field was originally cleared to the Isis Highway (This was a requirement of the approval from the forestry department). But this was too much to look after, so with renegotiation to this department the requirement was dropped.

At first a six post shelter was erected with the double plus sign on top which denotes to all overflying pilots that winch launching takes place at this airfield. This was still standing until earlier this year. After the six post shelter came the first hangar. The trusses were designed by Dick Beale who was an engineer at the Bundaberg Foundry and these were then built by Ray Stewart from Stewart and Sons. Once the roof trusses were complete all the club members of the time got together and erected the hangar. The club members held their meetings at the Prince of Wales Hotel (now a backpackers hostel) and the licensee of the hotel, Del Cox was very helpful in assisting the club in those early days. The closing years of the Sixties saw the first hangar complete and then the members focused on a clubhouse. The clubhouse came from the Central State School, Bundaberg. (It had previously been an RAAF building at the Hinkler Airport which was a training air base during World War II. No doubt the building would have been cut in two before moving it to the school. Mr Garney McDougal, a prominent house removalist transported what was then the manual arts building in two loads to its final destination where it was placed on pig sties.

The club members were back in action putting the building on stumps and the final result was a comfortable home base for all the members and guests. On a sadder note, in 2014 a fire destroyed the clubhouse and all the club's records. Tragically, the caretaker Gary Barrett died in the blaze. A new clubhouse has since been acquired in the form of a smaller donga-type building which suits the club better in today's environment. The old clubhouse was fully functional by the end of 1973 complete with a bore beside it (The water table is not far under the surface as the airstrip sits close to a part of the headwater system of the Elliott River). Water tanks were added and a small lawn locker was placed in position around the time the tractor shed was built (All that remained of the tractor shed in the mid-1990s were the stumps and these were gone by the mid-1996).

Now in the mid-1970s with everything fully functional the young guns wanted something a bit more slippery to fly, so the club members decided to raise funds by running chook raffles and these took place at the Tattersalls Hotel nearly every Friday night. Once sufficient funds were raised and the

club was about to order its first brand new glider, Tommy Foster from the Bundaberg Hotel decided he would like a new single seat glider also, so two single seat gliders became resident at the club (WQJ and WQK). With these new super sky surfers, many a competition was flown around the triangle. (Elliott Field to Gin Gin to Childers and back to Elliott Field) always fighting each other's best times. Instructors at this time of high activity in the club were Bevan Lane, Charlie Dean, Terry Bull, Dennis Taylor and the highly animated Ross Stegert who was loved by all (He certainly had his own unique style of teaching). Around this time Ron Hurst also took to the skies like a duck to water. He also loved the silver triangle. Ron (or Hursty as he was better known), quickly gained his instructor rating and was right into it by the early eighties. Bill Hatfield was also very active in the club and quite possibly could have been the first the first private owner of a second-hand aircraft by purchasing a Grauna baby. (This little beauty was light as a feather and went up like a homesick angel, but couldn't go anywhere due to its lack of penetration).

The Australian Air League was formed in June 1983 and not long after this there was a strong informal affiliation of young air league cadets that gravitated out to the gliding field. Davin Plath was one outstanding cadet that joined the club in 1985 and gained an instructor rating in 1988. He gained a commercial pilots licence not long after this and was flying commercially but tragically lost his life in an unfortunate aviation accident in March 1994. His sister Susan was also a keen member of the club. Some of the other members that stood out in the 80s and 90s were Bevan Lane and his son Chris who sought bluer pastures in the sky and joined the Kingaroy gliding club due to the better array of thermals inland where great distances could be covered. They were proud owners of beautiful glass ships also.

John Buettel and Ron McClure are two others that did much of the engineering work at the club. Apart from working on gliders John along with Cliff Wallace built the current double drum winch in the mid-90s and it is still giving outstanding service. A few engine changes later, a gear box change and modifying of the drums to accommodate the rope (which was done by the current CFI John Godfrey). There is still much service left in it.

A few more notable personalities in the club were John Wilson (a past CFI), Paul Briefies (a past president) and Noel Wallace (Cliff's brother). Cliff was also a past president.

In the mid-80s (in fact on the 13th, 14th, 15th of December 1985), an instructor's seminar was run by the GFA at Elliott Gliding Field by Mike Valentine, a well-respected member of the GFA who was the NTO (National Training Officer). He was assisted by Jeff Strickland (an ex-Navy pilot). It

was common practice in those days to run these courses at various locations.

Back to the mid-90s, Cliff Wallace, along with Leigh Evans, Mike and Sue Derry, Gunther Fischer and a few others were instrumental in gaining approval to erect a new hangar. Sue Derry did the application for the government grant for the new hangar early in 1994 and during the winter of the same year the hangar was fully functional and was opened by Clem Campbell.

A few years before this a dedicated gliding instructor Leigh Evans, who was a school teacher from Gayndah, joined the Bundaberg club. Not long after this he became CFI and was the second longest serving CFI after Charlie Dean. Leigh continued on for a long time before finally handing the reins over to John Godfrey (current CFI). John has been CFI for nearly a decade now. He not only oversees flying operations but just about does all the mechanical maintenance as well as form twos and general maintenance on all the gliders. Petrus, a former member of Central Queensland Gliding Club at Dululu (as was John), left us earlier this year to return to his home country, Belgium. In view of what is happening in Europe at the present, he would have been safer and better off for us at the club here in Bundaberg as he was of great assistance to John with maintenance on the gliders.

Some other notable pilots from the middle years of the club were Mike Keir and Geoff Pittman. Mike, now a Qantas captain came back to the club early in the 21st century and said he wanted to do some real flying again. He did a number of cross country flights with Alan Ing and not long after that bought a Stemme (VH-GGX), which was based at Gympie. He was an ex RAAF pilot. Geoff (ex RAF pilot and thorough gentleman) had many stories to tell. Apart from being a World War II pilot he had the rare honour of flying a captured German Stuka from North Africa back to old Blighty (England).

In the middle years many other names come to the fore like Theo Dekker, a skydiver that took up gliding after he had his fill of skydiving (The skydiving must have helped because he became the best student solo pilot of the year). There were a few golden oldies that flew but never managed solo like Theo Fisch, Vera and Gordon Lee who was a secretary at the change of the century. They were very keen but 70-plus is not the time to take up flying. Other pilots of note were Tony Lake (an instructor), Tony Holder (a maintenance engineer), David Ricketts and Derrick Mooney (who both loved cross country). Brian Sonter, who got sick the first few times he flew but persevered and became an exceptionally good glider pilot (He now drives trains like his father Ray did). Shane Freeman-Smith, a lucky young fellow who was in the Airforce cadets in Western Australia flew Mackie jet trainers

as a cadet at Pearce Airforce Base WA. He was a club secretary also in the early 2000s. Brian and Marie Groizard were also very active in the club in the late 1990s and early 2000s. The closing of the middle years saw a very active club which was bringing in nearly a thousand dollars a weekend quite often. The early and middle years saw a bevy of fabulous, flying females which added to the social side of the club tremendously.

Some of these in the early years were Desleigh Tully, Peggy Jensen who were both great solo pilots and loved cross country. These lovely ladies were joined by Robyn Davidson (who was one of the first females to freefall skydive in Queensland) and a number of other amazing female pilots. The middle years saw further female pilots join the club and go on to become solo pilots. These included Caroline Stibe, Sue Derry from South Africa and not to forget Tania from the Johnathon, Tania couple from Tasmania. These middle years also saw a heavy involvement with keen, young, teenage, female pilots (the minimum age to solo was 14 at the time and many of them had to wait until their 14th birthday to go solo). Two of these dedicated youngsters were Kerry Fischer and Michaela Valler. Rachada was also another young woman to go solo at a young age.

Mike Derry (Sue's husband), a journalist and also a former soldier from South Africa, was an asset to the club. A competent solo pilot who assisted greatly in promoting the club in the media, he is still a journalist in Bundaberg today. Mike and Sue were very active in the club at the change over from the middle years to the current years.

THE CURRENT YEARS

The 21st Century

Not long after the commencement of the new millennium there was a slow-down in club activity, as many members had left the district (hope it was not Y2K). Solo pilots that come to mind here are Caroline Larson, a science teacher who lapped up going solo. Mike Saunders and Paul Stockham were also competent pilots who loved soaring. Mike is one that left district and now works as a maritime adviser in Mackay. Paul, a dentist, does a lot of overseas work, helping out in third world countries. There have been several open days held over the last five years with the hope of bolstering club membership. Although there has been much activity with air experience flights, unfortunately a lot of these flights did not convert to full term memberships. In recent times however, we have seen a resurgence of young, female pilots, joining with the hope of becoming solo. This is a very promising sign for the future of the club.

Our birthday girl of the club Emma, turned 17 a couple of days before the 50th anniversary weekend. Her Dad Len who mostly accompanies her to the field is of great help to the club. She has taken on the task of typing and party decorations for the anniversary dinner on Saturday the 28th of November. Emma looks to be a very promising pilot and it should not be very long before she is solo (she has a great future ahead).

Some other names that stand out in the recent history of the club are Ron Vuichoud and Mark Fox (now club vice president), both of whom contributed greatly to the club during the transition years, with Mark continuing to do so. Nathan Pole and Mike Hetherington (a past president) also contributed greatly. The core of the club - the president Grant Davies, the CFI John Godfrey and the secretary Mike Avery all do more than their fair share which is much appreciated and sets a great example that should spill over to the rest of the club.

While losing the clubhouse last year dampened the spirits of the members, the club is now progressing nicely and the amenity of the gliding field is looking much better. There has been interest from Australian Airforce Cadets, Australian Air League and possibly other cadet organisations in the region looking to participate in gliding in other club activities. This is an echo of the middle years when the scout groups in the district accompanied the Australian Air League out to the gliding field.

The Bundaberg Gliding club has developed enormously over the past 50 years and has high hopes for the future. It is a promising club with a positive attitude and a passion for flying.

Leigh Evans - Previous CFI

Part of Bundaberg Gliding History with Leigh Evans' involvement.

Bundaberg Club became involved when Leigh Evans called a meeting at Gayndah and the Gayndah Gliding Club was started with Clive Barrett Instructor from Bundaberg Soaring Club bringing the Bundaberg club glider over for flights at Gayndah. February 3rd 1973 Clive Barrett CFI Gayndah Gliding Club officially operated with Gayndah ES52 Kookaburra GFF purchased 1973.

July 6th 1974 Blanik GIM Purchased for Gayndah Gliding Club and Kookaburra GFF sold.

January 20th 1985 Maryborough Club Kookaburra was used by Leigh Evans at Bundaberg, for spin training of Bundaberg members.

1989 Bundaberg Twin Astir, Bundaberg's only 2 seater training aircraft, was grounded for modifications for several months and no other aircraft was available for training.

May 14th 1989 Gayndah GIM Blanik was loaned to Bundaberg Soaring Club for training of students. Leigh Evans Level 2 Instructor operated with Gayndah/ Maryborough/Bundaberg clubs.

Bundaberg Executive had meeting at Gayndah and purchased GIM by paying off a loan of \$1000. January 6th 1990 GIM Blanik transferred to Bundaberg Soaring Club and Gayndah Gliding Club ceased operations.

Leigh Evans became a Level 2 Instructor at Bundaberg 1990 still living at Gayndah and travelled weekly to Bundaberg to Instruct on weekends.

1994 Leigh Evans transferred to Bundaberg and became CFI Bundaberg Soaring Club taking over from Charlie Dean. Weekly newspaper articles on flights sent to Bundaberg and local newspaper for publicity. Grant approved for new hangar. Hangar opened mid-1994.

Club official documents modified and name changed to Bundaberg Gliding Club more suited to modern requirements.

At this time the club was very busy, flying Saturday and Sunday, with many days the club flying 21 flights. The club owned two, two seater trainers and a single seater. As well a privately owned single seater operated over these weekends.

Leigh's Personal logbook shows several days of flying 9 flights and occasionally 11 daily flights at Bundaberg during the time of 2001 up to about 2011.

One flight was Bundaberg to Gayndah and return, by the late Cliff Wallace and Leigh Evans to claim a Queensland 'Come and Get It' trophy. The trophy still exists today in a Queensland club.

A new Twin drum winch designed by members to replace an outdated winch.

The Twin Astir was sold as Bundaberg was unable to manage necessary repairs.

Had 'Come and try day' to attract members. Had 'Student upgrading to aerotow' at Kingaroy. Leaflets to motels and tourist areas to attract interest. Talks to organisations in Bundaberg to attract interest.

Second longest serving Bundaberg CFI after Charlie Dean.

Leigh Evans began Gliding Instructing 27/5/1978 with student Phil Bryant (since deceased). So Leigh's flying record:- Leigh Evans started training in Kingaroy February 27th 1966 with Ian Aspland as instructor in Kookaburra ES52III.

February next year 50 years in gliding and 38 years instructing with 2085 hours and 7053 flights.

Leigh handed over role of CFI to present CFI John Godfrey.

Regards Leigh Evans

John Godfrey - Current CFI

My involvement with the Bundaberg Gliding Club started in November 2004 when Leigh Evans was taking a holiday to New Zealand. Leigh was looking for an acting CFI in his absence. I had recently sold our business in Moura and relocated to our beach house at Toogoom.

The club was flying Saturdays and Sundays with a Blanik trainer a Twin Astir and an Astir CS for advanced pilots. I had previously flown all these types doing my initial training and going solo in a Blanik at Moura, also flying at Central Queensland in an IS 28 B2 and doing my silver C certificate cross country in an Astir CS.

I started gliding in Moura in 1992. As many members did shift work at the mine and our CFI Greg McGrath would fly in from Bluff to train us, it took two years of extended periods not flying to go solo. We would also travel to Taroom and CQ clubs to do some flying. Another member and I cross-hired an IS 29 D2 glider for a couple of years to gain experience.

In 2000 I purchased a Grob G109 motorglider as it was difficult to get a crew to go gliding. I still own this aircraft and have made two trips to Burketown to fly the morning glory roll cloud.

I gained my annual maintenance authority in 2002. It has been put to good use at the Bundy club as I have done almost all annual inspections since joining, also maintaining vehicles and converting the winch to use rope.

I became CFI in 2006 when Leigh wanted to retire from that position.

A grant from the Council enabled us to build a new mobile "pie cart" with myself and a mate building the frame and past member Nathan Pole doing the cladding. Another grant from the gaming fund enabled us to replace our broken down tractor and upgrade our slasher.

After the grounding of L13 Blaniks we purchased a K7 to continue training until our Blanik XQO was modified to an upgraded Llewellyn structural

modification done by Seabird Aviation in Hervey Bay. I spent six months at Seabird to oversee the work and do repairs on behalf of the club which resulted in a good-as-new aircraft for the club. Unfortunately two years later it was written off in a landing accident with no injury to the pilot. We were able to find another Blanik GPS that had the Llewellyn mod done previously and purchased it for the club.

In an unfortunate fire the same year our clubhouse was burnt to the ground along with our caretaker in his caravan. Another setback for the club. Downsizing the clubhouse and repairing an old store shed as a workshop has our facility in good shape.

Recently we have purchased a Grob G103 Twin 2 to upgrade our fleet which we should be flying by November this year, with some new students and flying Air Force and Australian Air cadets the club is kept busy.

The club currently has four level 2 instructors and a small but keen band of members to share the many jobs to keep the club running. I thank them for their support during my time as CFI.

Regards
John Godfrey

Past Chief Flying Instructors (CFIs)

Sel Hewitt

Charlie Dean

Bevan Lane

Terry Bull

Bill Hatfield

John Wilson

Leigh Evans

John Godfrey

The Student Glider Pilot's Prayer

My instructor is my shepherd, I shall not undershoot.

He prepareth a glideslope for me in the presence of my blunders.

He taketh me down thru the crosswind landings.

His curses and pleadings, they pointeth me in the right direction.

And yea, though I fly through the valley of sink,

I fear not the down draughts, and his words are with me.

And I shall remember to the end of my days.

"Attitude, attitude, wings level, string straight"

