

JANUARY 2021 ISSUE

# PROP WASH

HASTINGS DISTRICT FLYING CLUB NEWSLETTER



## HDFC OPEN DAY

See different aircraft and sign up for flights at HDFC!

## IT'S 100 YEARS SINCE THE FIRST AIRCRAFT LANDED IN PORT MACQUARIE

The historical first landing of an aircraft at Port Macquarie.

## FIRST FLIGHT MELBOURNE TO SYDNEY POST 2020 COVID-19 PANDEMIC BORDER CLOSURES

Water cannon salute to mark the resumption of flights.

## THE FUTURE OF TRAVEL

Will we ever see a return to those halcyon days of routine air travel - or are our hopes for such a return up in the air?

## SWITZERLAND TO KENYA, EAST AFRICA

Encounters through East Africa.



# NOTE FROM THE EDITOR OF PROPWASH

## VERONICA LIND

Editor, Marketing and Communications for  
Hastings District Flying Club



Image Source: Chris Higgins



## IMPACT OF AVIATION

Aviation is central to Australia's economy and quality of life. Aviation underpins Australian business: transporting workers, tourists and high value freight. The sector directly employed over 90,000 people and contributed \$20 billion to the economy before COVID-19. Furthermore, aviation indirectly ensures enhancement to the tourism, mining, manufacturing and higher education sectors. Globally, airports and businesses around it provide 60% of aviation jobs worldwide.

The aviation sector reached -96% of operations worldwide, having a heavy impact on the economy of airports reaching between -57% and -58% of revenues i.e. about \$97 billion. It is imperative that the future of aviation needs re-strategising.

The Australian Government has contributed more than \$1.3 billion to support and maintain aviation operations and jobs.

Regional Australia has always faced aviation challenges even before COVID-19 as regional airports struggle to remain financially viable. As a result, many regional communities do not enjoy the same level of air service, air ticket price competition and flexibility as Australia's cities.

Yet, Regional Australia is where one in three Australians live, work and study. Aviation plays an important role servicing the needs of regional and remote communities across Australia by providing and maintaining access to air services that include transport and freight, medical, search and rescue, social and law enforcement, and business/tourism travel.

I feel what we do at the Hastings District Flying Club to promote regional aviation and flying training is seeding the growth in regional aviation and I hope everyone in Port Macquarie is proud of what HDFC does to fulfil aviation dreams.

Let me know how you're coping during these strange times by writing to the **editor@hdfc.com.au**. Continue to send your stories and take good care of yourself.

Don't give up on your aviation dreams,

**Veronica**

### Important Information.

COVID-19 advice for industry from CASA - <https://www.casa.gov.au/about-us/covid-19-advice-industry>

COVID-Safe Domestic Flying—Domestic Passenger Journey Protocol - <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/aviation/domestic-passenger-journey-protocol.aspx>





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HDFC OPEN DAY  
18 APRIL,  
9 AM TO 3 PM  
AT THE HASTINGS  
DISTRICT FLYING CLUB

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PLEASE CONTRIBUTE YOUR ARTICLES TO  
Veronica Lind at [editor@hdfc.com.au](mailto:editor@hdfc.com.au)





The RAAus team thoroughly examined every facet of the flying school operation and were most impressed.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT JANUARY 2021

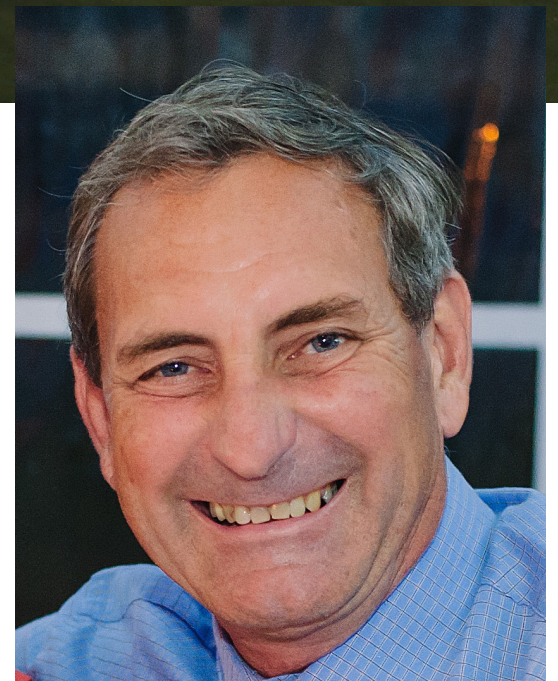
### WELCOME TO 2021

I hope everyone had an enjoyable festive season to cap off a year best forgotten. Although 2020 will be remembered by many as the COVID-19 year of financial and social heartbreak, I am pleased to announce our club has weathered the storm emerging relatively unscathed. However, the threat of viral infection is still very real so we must continue to adhere to the HDfC COVID safe plan as displayed in the clubhouse and remain mindful of the hygiene protocols required.

Following the March/April six week COVID-19 shutdown flying activity has been strong. Utilisation has averaged 100 hours per month with a record 137 hours during October. Sling 1624 has now logged 1450 hours with Sling 8470 not far behind on 900 hours. Enquiries have begun on the acquisition of a new engine for 1624 later this year with expressions of interest now being sought for the old one.

Along with higher utilisation comes increased maintenance. Unfortunately, there have been several instances where inappropriate ground handling has resulted in damage requiring unscheduled maintenance. All pilots are reminded the L in LSA stands for Light. Accordingly, the aircraft must always be handled with care and respect. Please play your part in allowing the club to continue providing affordable flying to its members.

Whilst highly conscious of maintaining affordable flying, the club must also closely consider its costs. Unfortunately, with an increase in the maintenance cost and a change in the club insurance portfolio the committee has decided the aircraft hire



*Rod Davison,  
President, HDfC.*



rate must increase by \$10 per hour commencing the 1st March. The new rate of \$160 per hour remains highly competitive and affordable.

In July 2020, the club commenced using the Rotax preferred Premium Unleaded 95 fuel. This allowed a significant fuel cost saving. Since July, 6386 litres have been collected from the Service Station and transported to our aircraft in 20 litre containers. This equates to moving 319 containers or much work and is just another example of the tremendous work performed by a few club volunteers to keep you flying. Work which goes unnoticed. In this case all Sling pilots should show their appreciation to Steve, Ray, Mike and Doug.

In response to the large number of aircraft noise complaints, Port Macquarie-Hastings Council (PMHC) has appointed a consultant to formulate a Fly Neighbourly plan. Stakeholder meetings were conducted in December with Steve, Ray, Rod Hall and myself representing HDFC. The main avenues being pursued by PMHC appear to be Right Hand Circuits on runway 21 and some form of curfew on circuit training. Our deputation rejected both to varying degrees and insisted that aircraft/aircrew safety must be a top priority in formulating any plan.

Repair of the hangar roof and walls will proceed following a successful HDFC bid to obtain a \$27,000 Community Building Partnership grant. The club will contribute a similar amount to ensure the project can be completed. At this stage work is scheduled for late March.

Sixteen high quality applications were received for the 2020 HDFC Flying Scholarships. It was gratifying to observe the enthusiasm and efforts of all applicants. Following much deliberation, we are pleased to announce the successful applicants are Jayden Barker and Liam Ross. Congratulations also to Harry Freudenstein who recently received a RAAus scholarship.

The HDFC Flying Training School saw a changing of the guard in November. Ray Lind took over the CFI role from Steve Smith. Steve was thrust into the role over 4 years ago on a temporary basis. This became permanent. As well as a highly experienced pilot, Steve is also a team player, gaining the respect of student and instructor alike. Thanks Steve, for a job very well done. Within a few weeks of accepting the CFI role, Ray with Steve's assistance was busy undergoing a biennial RAAus School Inspection. The RAAus team thoroughly examined every facet of the flying school operation and were most impressed. Well done to all involved.

COVID-19 was not going to stop our club recognising and applauding the achievements of club members during the past year. Guided by the HDFC COVID safe Plan the event was moved to the hangar to accommodate the large crowd. The venue proved extremely popular with pressure now on for more hangar events. Congratulations to the record number of award recipients who are no doubt listed elsewhere in this Propwash. However, a special congratulations to Pilot of the Year, David Cooke; Club Person of the Year, Steve Smith and Student Pilot of the Year, Jacob Dowd. Particularly pleasing again this year was the large number of young pilots with their families in attendance. The HDFC is certainly not just a club for old fuddy duddies.

Before closing I would like to mention a few more notable achievements. First, David Cooke OAM officially accepted his Order of Australia on his birthday (2/12/20). Second, Steve Smith has just logged an amazing 20,000 flying hours. Third, Benn Farawell has purchased his very own Jabiru. Well done guys.

Bring on 2021. We can look forward to the next 12 months with optimism. The club is well positioned for another successful year.

Stay Safe and Enjoyable Flying.

**Rod**

**President@hdfc.com.au**



*HDFC committee accepting \$27,000 Community Building Partnership grant from Leslie Williams*



On Saturday, 5 Feb 1921, the Avro 504K biplane first landed in Port Macquarie. Then in 1923, Captain Bradstreet from Royal Newcastle Aero Club had a force landing in the same aircraft in Fernbank after an engine failure broke the propeller.



# IT'S 100 YEARS SINCE THE FIRST AIRCRAFT LANDED IN PORT MACQUARIE

The historical first landing of an aircraft at Port Macquarie, on Oxley Reserve, then the Golf Course originally occurred on Saturday, 5 Feb 1921.

I believe it was WWI flying ace Lt Frank Roberts who flew the Avro 504K biplane. Lieutenant Roberts was from the Australian Flying Corps, which eight weeks later would become the Royal Australian Air Force.

The plane had arrived from Britain the previous May as one of the first five of 100 surplus World War I aircraft given to Australia as part of the so-called Imperial Gift of 1919. The British Government had an ulterior motive for the Imperial Gift. It had far too many planes and, by giving them to member nations of the Commonwealth, the defence chiefs were saved the embarrassment of having to destroy them.

In an interesting sidelight, 21 months after the aircraft landed in Port Macquarie, another Avro 504K was to become the first plane operated by Qantas to carry a paying passenger.

The people of Port Macquarie were ready to dig deep into their pockets. Lieutenant Roberts offered the residents an opportunity to take a short joy ride. It wasn't a cheap exercise for the locals, who had to pay £2 10s - for the privilege of a few brief minutes skimming low over the town, Hastings River and the ocean.

The first passengers that took the flight were; G.G. Webb, A. A. Cumming, J. Wholohan, J. Steele, J. S. Murphy, J. Hayward, L. Delaforce, H. Bird, Miss A. Waldron, and Mrs. J. S. Murphy with her niece.

But a large number quickly parted with their 'fifty bob' and, as the Port Macquarie News, noted: 'It was evidently a fascinating experience, and all who ventured were delighted with having a chance to fly before reaching the angelic state of existence.'



# FIRST FLIGHT

## MELBOURNE TO SYDNEY POST 2020 COVID-19 PANDEMIC BORDER CLOSURES

Water cannon salute to mark the resumption of services between Victoria and New South Wales.  
Departed Melbourne Monday 23rd Nov. 2020 at 06:00 Hours.

HDFC Flying Member - Captain Anson Needham & First Officer George Knowles  
QF404. Qantas 737-800. VH-XZJ.



### QANTAS' INDIGENOUS FLYING ART SERIES ART SERIES

"The latest aircraft in Qantas' Indigenous Flying Art series has touched down in Sydney, showing its new Aboriginal inspired livery design. The livery on the brand new 737-800 aircraft was inspired by the work of late West Australian Aboriginal painter, Paddy Bedford. The aircraft named "Mendoowoorji" is the fourth aircraft in Qantas' flying art series, all of which have been in partnership with Australian designers Balarinji."

Source - [www.chinaaviationdaily.com/news/30/30375.html](http://www.chinaaviationdaily.com/news/30/30375.html)





*Robin Wilson,  
Editor of  
Brilliant-Online Magazine*

# THE FUTURE OF TRAVEL

## UP IN THE AIR

In our COVID-19 pandemic-ravaged world there's probably no more horrifying scenario than sitting trapped in a long metal tube for hours on end, elbow-to-elbow with complete strangers, all of you breathing the same air continually circulated around the interior.

Couple that with fellow passengers aged from a few months to old age and you have the perfect petri dish for fast transmission of COVID-19 infections.

That's why air travel - with its innate ability to transmit infection across international borders - was one of the first elements of normal life to be severely restricted when the world began to comprehend COVID-19's virulence and potential for spreading far and wide.



It seems incredible now, but not too long ago we were all quite happy to sit cramped into these long metal tubes alongside perfect strangers and breathe re-circulated air, sometimes on long haul flights across the globe that stretched for many hours on end.

In fact - many of us looked forward to it, especially those up at the sharp end in Business or Economy with more space to stretch out and indulge themselves in the in-flight luxuries.

It was a scenario that was entirely commonplace and repeated all over the world multiple times each day.

But now that COVID-19 is entrenched worldwide throughout practically every aspect of our lives and has already changed so much - what's the future of air travel?

Will we ever see a return to those halcyon days of routine air travel - or are our hopes for such a return up in the air?



*Air travel has the ability to spread COVID-19 far and wide across international borders.*

## Welcome Aboard the *New Normal*

Airbus chief executive Guillaume Faury has described the COVID-19 pandemic as: "The gravest crisis the aerospace industry has ever known."

Elsewhere, the International Air Transport Association (IATA), which represents almost 300 airlines, said the industry: "...is only at the very beginning of a long and difficult recovery," and added there is: "...tremendous uncertainty about what impact a resurgence of new COVID-19 cases in key markets could have."

To put it in cold perspective, in April, Heathrow Airport's passenger numbers were down by 97 percent; and it was estimated that 30 percent of the world's 26,000 commercial jets were grounded.

However, despite all the stark realities of cancelled flights, staff lay-offs, passenger numbers dwindling to almost nothing and mothballed fleets of aircraft, it's worth remembering that even before COVID-19 the air travel industry had a resilient legacy of bouncing back from setbacks.

A comparable crisis came in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks in 2001, which engendered fear in the travelling public and as a result, created tumbling passenger numbers. Those passenger numbers eventually came back, although the healing process in the industry incorporated

adjustments in activities and operations to align with reduced demands.

Some airlines went out of business, while others with expansion plans were forced to scale them back to keep operating efficiently and profitably, to keep pace with an altered business environment.

A graphic illustration of this is the high-demand lucrative US market, which prior to 9/11 had eight dominant airlines, but now only has four.

But the overall result was a leaner and arguably more efficient industry, although passengers forced to cram into the fewer flights available might take issue with that.

### Essential Take-Off

The air travel industry has also come under concerted fire in recent years from the climate change lobby, which demonised aircraft emissions as a major cause of global warming.

This argument has achieved a certain degree of ratification during the COVID-19 pandemic, with sharp drop in worldwide flights allegedly resulting in clearer skies and even some repair of the ozone layer.

But those who vilify the air travel industry as a malignant global polluter would do well to consider the many

and diverse benefits it's brought to many fundamental aspects of our modern life.

Its transport and distribution of cargo is an integral component of international trade and industry, without which many modern businesses and the societies in which they operate would face very real struggles.

And no matter your opinion of the growth of international holidays, this burgeoning industry and its associated tourism businesses provide employment and career opportunities to millions of people around the world.

All this now faces serious and long-standing consequences caused by the onset of COVID-19.

### Closed Borders

The shutters came down on international passenger air travel when many governments made it public policy - quite rightly - to close their borders to limit the spread of COVID-19 infection.

Now with vaccines being rolled out and even forecasts made of returns to "normality" in the near future, some are assessing whether or not to lift the shutters, and to what extent to meet demands of the much-mooted New Normal.



So, the easing of government entry restrictions is the basic consideration for getting airlines flying - and the business and tourism dollars flowing again.

What signs are there of this happening, with governments still shouldering the responsibility of protecting their citizens from COVID-19 infection?

The growing availability of vaccines give optimism and it's likely that soon permissions for travel will be granted to passengers holding vaccine certification.

*Travel Bubbles* and *Travel Corridors* have also been proposed and introduced in some markets as ways to develop flows of air travel between countries that set up reciprocal arrangements, based on assessed COVID-19 rates in each other's populations to exclude potential new infections.

But this may also involve testing all passengers at both departure and entry, a potentially cumbersome bottleneck which would require administration, create stress and stretch travel times.

### In-Flight Signs of the Times

Airlines who've managed to operate limited flights within the restrictions of the pandemic have already given some clues about how the air travel experience for passengers will be re-set for the post-pandemic world.

Many on-board amenities, such as in-flight magazines, pillows and blankets, have been scrapped.

Even some meals served by cabin crew from trolleys are no more, replaced by snack bags and refreshments.

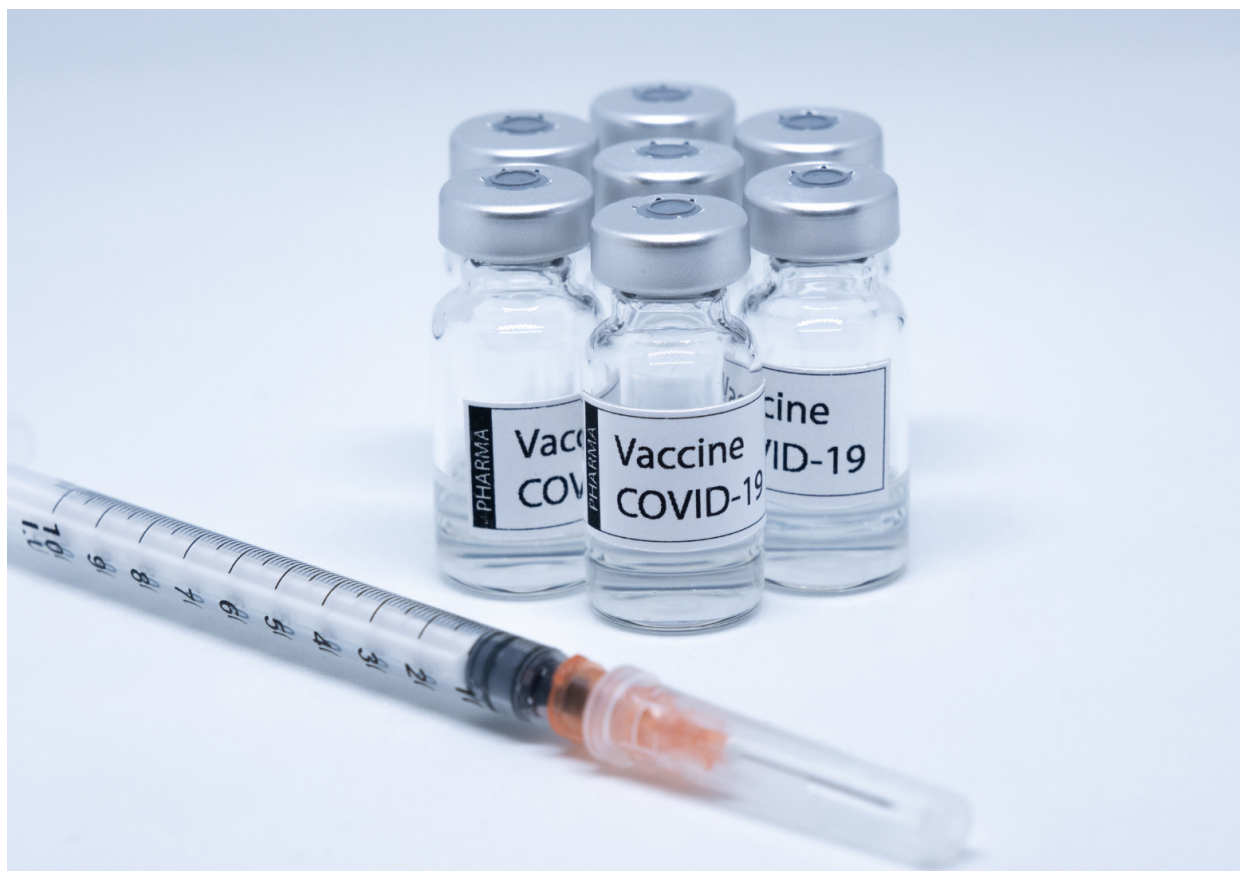
These pared-back services are for a good and pragmatic reason - to reduce person-to-person contact that may give rise to transmission of the virus.

They also have the added benefit of reducing costs, a vital factor for airlines that have been hemorrhaging money during the pandemic.

And it goes without saying that masks and face shields will be de rigueur in post-pandemic passenger cabins. Most predictions are for these to still being mandated for public environments even when COVID-19 infection rates reduce.



*Few airlines have managed to operate flights within the restrictions of the pandemic by implementing many changes including disinfection procedures.*



*The growing availability of vaccines across the world gives some optimism for air travel to passengers holding a vaccine certification.*

Of course, that probably means requirement of social distancing will also still be place, so it remains to be seen how airlines will square that particular circle with the need for passenger numbers to maximise load factors.

They'll also be trying to do this in the face of a recent US government mandate that now - and in the

foreseeable future - airlines fill no more than two-thirds of their passenger cabins.

Unfortunately, it seems that all these efforts to make airlines Lean and Mean won't necessarily extend to lower fares.

Some analysts have forecast fares will drop in line with passenger demand, but with aircraft grounded and fewer





*The New Normal where masks and face shields are required for air travel.*

Image Source: [www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/coronavirus-outbreak-aarogya-setu-alerted-on-697-potential-hotspots-120051200086\\_1.html](http://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/coronavirus-outbreak-aarogya-setu-alerted-on-697-potential-hotspots-120051200086_1.html)

seats to go round in the global market the airlines may – even with potential lower fuel costs – be tempted to make hay by hiking prices to compensate for all their months of lost operations.

Another aspect to consider in this is the very real possibility of the crisis forcing some airlines into bankruptcy.

For it's a sad fact that when an airline goes bankrupt it reduces the number of competitors in the marketplace, which forces up prices.

### **Buckle Up**

The air transport industry's standard MO of forcing hordes of people to share the same confined space for hours on end flies in the face of any COVID-19 considerations - no pun intended - and makes it a prime candidate for rigid implementation of restrictions.

So, it may very well be that we never return to the days of crowded terminal queues and being crammed into poky aircraft cabins.

Like everything else about this unprecedented pandemic, there's widespread uncertainty about how - if at all - the industry which has become such an essential and ubiquitous part of modern life - will survive.

Though as we've seen, efforts to adjust to the New Normal have already been made and the industry has previously shown that it's resilient and flexible enough to tailor operations around new restrictions.

And it's more than obvious that air transport's essential role in supporting and driving tourism economies around the world has to be revived.

Whether we'll ever again sit cheek-by-

jowl with complete strangers in a long metal tube for hours on end remains to be seen.

However, it's pretty certain that in our future post-pandemic world we'll still be buckling up and enjoying the ride - maybe just not that many of us as before, and perhaps in slightly more comfort.

**Robin Wilson**





Image Source: Chris Higgins

# DUE TO RESTRICTIONS IN TRAVEL,

DO WE SEE MORE PEOPLE BUYING THEIR OWN  
PLANES OR CHARTER PRIVATE JETS?



## Increasing demand in private air travel

Due to restrictions in travel, do we see more people buying their own planes or charter private jets - well maybe?

"As we think about a post-pandemic world, we are confident that the overall market for domestic private aviation will grow significantly, as what was once seen as a luxury is now often considered a necessity. - says Kenny Dichter is CEO of Wheels Up.

Chris Higgins who learnt flying with Bob Needham as a young boy said, "We have seen at least a 100 percent increase in the use of Private Jets. At the moment we own a Hawker 800XP that is scheduled to fly nearly 1,000 hours for the year of 2021."

Chris is now Chief Pilot with a VIP Jet Charter Company, Laurel Highlands Jet Center.



Chris Higgins, Chief Pilot with Laurel Highlands Jet Center.

## The demand for pilots

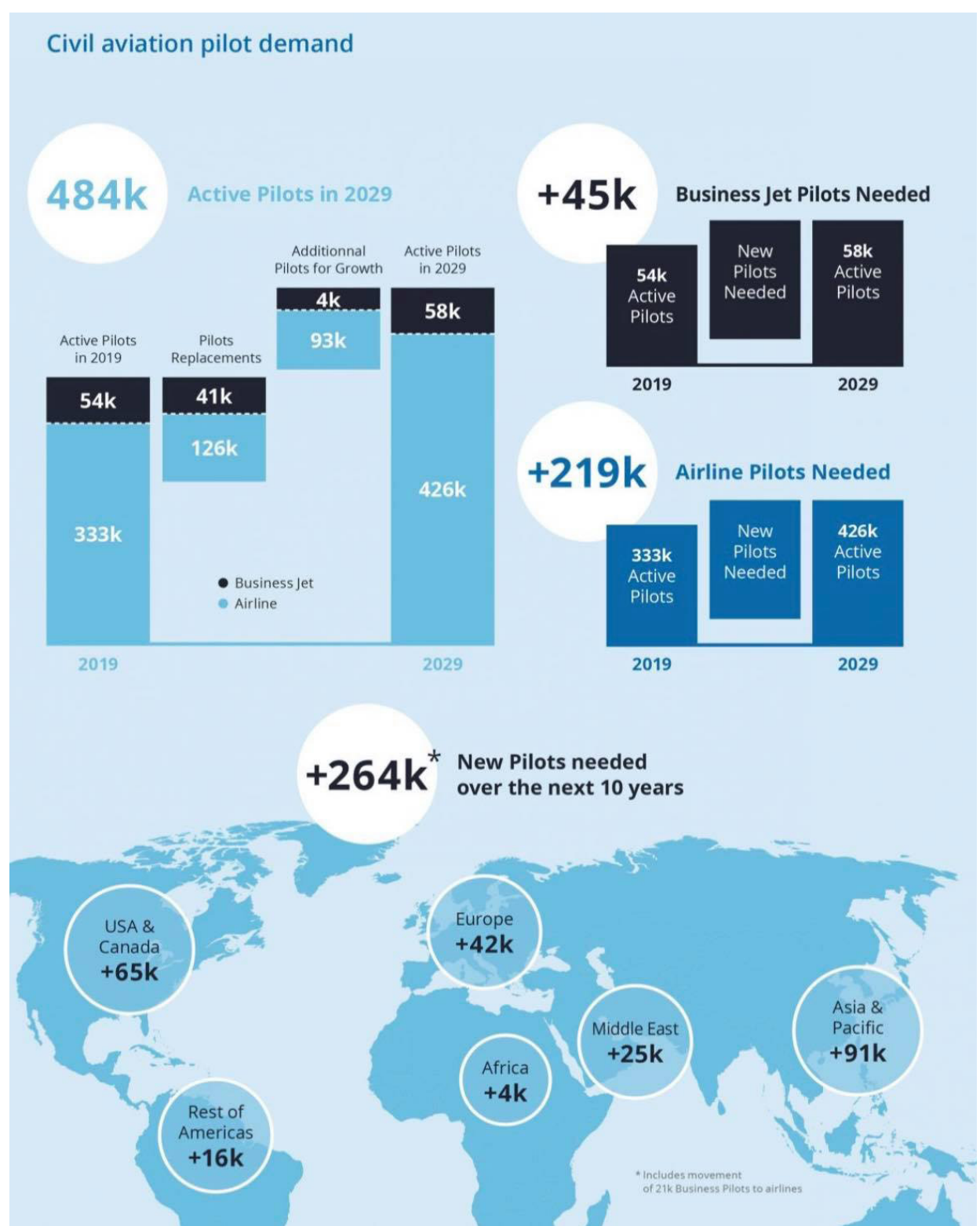
"The pilot shortage is being hidden by the pandemic. 21,600 pilots left the US workforce in 2020. The workforce is retiring at an alarming rate and already, the airlines believe that we may have more aircraft parked in the desert than pilots to fly them. What we have now is somewhat of a balloon payment that is coming due on pilot training.", says Chris Higgins.

According to the 2020-2029 CAE Pilot Demand Outlook, retirement and attrition are expected to continue to be a challenge for the civil aviation industry as air travel recovers progressively.

"This is expected to drive an acute demand for pilots, resulting in an estimated short-term need for approximately 27,000 new professional pilots starting in late 2021," says the report.



Chris Higgins with co-pilot.



The graph shows the demand for civil aviation pilots  
 Image Source: [www.pilotcareernews.com/cae-forecasts-pilot-demand-returning-by-end-of-2021/?fbclid=IwAR156LubhSgTjkmVcff5RNNYgpNm93lQgLGjrfBRAiPXPhgrRWk\\_ky48urc](http://www.pilotcareernews.com/cae-forecasts-pilot-demand-returning-by-end-of-2021/?fbclid=IwAR156LubhSgTjkmVcff5RNNYgpNm93lQgLGjrfBRAiPXPhgrRWk_ky48urc)



A vintage-style map of Africa and the Middle East, showing various countries and cities. A compass rose is visible in the bottom left corner, indicating North, South, East, and West. The map is rendered in a warm, aged color palette.

# SWITZERLAND TO KENYA, EAST AFRICA

Phoebe-Ann Needham talks about her long yet exciting encounters through East Africa with her husband Bob Needham.





*The flag of Switzerland resembles the Red Cross and could be confused from a distance.*



*Present day view of travelling by train through Switzerland.*

Once, many years ago, when we were young and naive, Bob was asked to ferry a Pilatus Porter aircraft out from Switzerland to Kenya. Bob was then to be employed as a crop spraying pilot by the owner - a happy, go lucky, over the top, Italian - who had fond ideas of us all living together in one house as a big, happy family!! Bob and I, fairly newlywed, refrained from informing him that the visions this evoked (all living together) were too horrendous even to contemplate with any degree of equanimity! However, it was an opportunity not to be missed. Bob only had about 2,000 flying hours then, mostly instructing and with a few x-countries from England to France; and the largest aircraft he had flown was a Cessna 180. As usual, this was all supposed to have happened yesterday, and the company gave Bob an air ticket to Zurich. Instead of going with him on my maiden name passport I, stupidly, thought I could get a new one quickly in my married name. As I was 6 months pregnant and obviously so, this may have coloured my judgement somewhat! Needless to say, having admitted to being married, they said I was not permitted to use my old passport and immediately cut off the corner and wrote cancelled all over it lest I be tempted to try. As we lived 100 miles north of Nairobi, I couldn't sit on the British Embassy steps, so to speak, making a nuisance of myself, and so I met Bob in Zurich, missing out on a week's holiday in England, which would have been lovely as I hadn't been back there for some years. Also, I have always simply HATED travelling on my own. Anyway, the timetables seem to work out well and

we met in Zurich with no problem. Bob's German, having spent 2 years in Germany on National Service, came in good stead trying to find a train to Stans, and then in the hotel. It was a very clean, nice hotel with friendly staff, but it stank of garlic all the time, which, in my 'interesting condition' made me somewhat nauseated and I was simply thankful to be spending all day at Stans Airport with Bob.

The part aircraft owner, Tony Vecchi, had given Bob 5 hours to complete his conversion on the Pilatus Porter. This was quite a hard ask especially as his Instructor, Guido, could not speak or understand one word of English and his German was on a par with Bob's. I think he was a Swiss/Italian. The other person doing the conversion with Bob was Mike, a Royal Australian Air Force instructor, who had been allowed 20 hours. Guido was a bit horrified at first at my request to sit in on all the briefings and flying with Bob but relented when he saw my PPL and realised we were both flying back to Kenya. On our first flight Guido wanted to show Bob exactly what the Porter could do so at 2000ft. over the hangar he put the engine into Beta range, and we descended vertically to land on the tarmac in front of the hangar, stopping in about 20 metres. It was a fantastic performance. On the circuit at Stans you climbed up to 2000ft. on take-off on a very steep continuous left hand climbing turn, heading towards Mt. Pilatus towering above you, onto downwind to find yourself almost on top of the runway on one side and looking into peoples' windows over the wing on the other;

then a very steep descending turn onto finals. Take-off from the other end entailed a right-hand turn. The other side of the runway was completely clear, but it was Military Airspace. With the Beta range, there was, of course, no problem. We spent all our time at the airfield and Bob continued to study in the evenings, but we did take one day off to go to the top of Mt. Tiflis on a funicular and then a ski-lift. It was May so still plenty of snow but not too cold. Very beautiful but, loving Africa, I have always preferred wide open spaces. Bob finished the conversion within the 5 hours, but Guido decided to fly us to Arno on the other side of the Alps through the valleys as the low cloud cover was expected to last for days.

1.

The Porter had good basic instrumentation, but Bob did not hold an Instrument Rating and you really had to have good local knowledge through the mountains to get to Arno. Bob was sitting in the hopper as it hadn't yet been filled with fuel and I felt a little bit of 'separation sickness' initially because the door was glass right down to the floor - almost like the feeling in the Drifter Ultralight!

Arno. A place we'll never forget. Nor possibly will some Customs Officers forget us. Every day for 4 days we got them out early in the morning in the hope of leaving that day. Every day the cloud was down on the deck in the one valley we could fly through





*Present day view of travelling through the valleys of the Alps*



*Present day view of Arno, a river in the region of Italy*

to get out of the hills. Tony Vecchi was sending cables saying it was imperative we get the aircraft to Kenya ASAP and finally stated that if we were still there the next day, he'd send an Instrument Rated pilot to do the flight. This meant paying our own way home, and we had no money to do this, and neither did Bob (nor I) intend to forego this chance of a lifetime. God took pity on us - the valley was clear enough to fly through the following afternoon. As we exited the valley all we could see around us were purple/black storm clouds, some of which were debouching their loads and others just about to. There was no alternative but to land at Malpensa Airport, Milan, just half an hour out of Arno with 8 hours' fuel on board in the hopper and in an auxiliary tank which was fitted just behind our heads. We were way above the landing weight of the aircraft, and this was Bob's first solo landing! Needless to say, he put the aircraft down like a feather. What a lovely dinner we had that night - Arno was behind us and we were on our way. Tony wouldn't be able to contact us again!

Milan to Cagliari on the southernmost tip of Sardinia was our aim for the next day as we wanted to be fresh starting to cross the Mediterranean Sea, in case we ended up in it in our life rafts. One engine is always a bit of a worry except that being a gas turbine it was pretty reliable. Our cruise speed of 100 mph, more or less equivalent to Cessna 152 VH-PFJ's 90 kts., meant it wouldn't be a fast crossing to Tunis in North Africa although it was the narrowest bit of sea. The weather was still not good that day and, having flown over Ajaccio in Corsica, we encountered heavy sea fog down to the ground. Air Traffic control

was reluctant to allow us to turn back and land - no doubt because Corsica was French and we hadn't cleared Customs in Italy, and Ajaccio can't have had Immigration facilities as we didn't go through any formalities. We had dinner at a lovely Italian restaurant, which I remember well - roughewn whitewashed walls and bright and gay with colourful pictures, hangings, wine bottles in straw containers etc.

The following day we left the European weather behind and overflew Cagliari completely forgetting we hadn't yet cleared Italian Customs and Immigration! We wondered whether we'd ever be found if we had to ditch as we didn't see a single vessel during the sea crossing. We didn't have anything as modern as an ELT of course and Bob was beginning to have a lot of trouble with radio frequencies and Malta seemed to be the only place he could make contact with, and this only infrequently. We later discovered we had been sold an out-of-date frequency book! We had also been assured that, as we were flying a Swiss Registered aircraft, we would need no visas to transit the various countries in Africa. Never believe anything you are told by foreigners - I think all they wanted was to get us out of their hair, as of course it's always difficult to communicate in different languages! Much later we realised we were more under suspicion flying an aircraft with a white cross on red which could be confused as a plane owned by the Red Cross. Evidently mercenaries on illegal flights (gunrunning or whatever) tended to paint red crosses on their aircraft.

2.

Suddenly - oh joy - there was the North African coast and suddenly - oh dear - there was nothing, but a bowl of heat haze and Bob took over to pull me out of the spiral dive. As already stated, the instrument panel was very basic, and I hadn't done any instrument flying training. That was a salutary lesson. We flew at 10,000ft. Most of the time in Africa and as we had no auto pilot I flew once we were airborne and until joining for landing as Bob didn't want to risk any problems with someone else's aircraft, especially as, being pregnant, I was unlicensed. He had also had to get a Swiss PPL to fly a Swiss registered aircraft. I think it was lucky I was there as he seemed to be spending all his time looking up the Airrad for radio frequencies and attempting to make contact - most often unsuccessfully. We landed safely at Idris in Libya, after 5 hours in the air, having been refused permission to land initially not having received prior authority. Bob told them he was coming in anyway as we had insufficient fuel to go anywhere else, which was not quite true. We were, however, becoming quite tired. On landing we were informed that, without visas, there was no way we could leave the airport to go to a hotel in Tripoli. We'd have to spend the night on a hard backed wooden chair with no food or drink in the so-called airport lounge. At this stage the excessive heat and exhaustion made me feel giddy and sick, so I sat down on the floor with my head on my knees. Bob mentioned I was with child and the whole atmosphere altered dramatically and they couldn't have been kinder or





*Present day view of Tripoli in Libya*



*Present day view of Cagliari, Sardinia, Italy*

more helpful. We spent a comfortable night in a hotel in Tripoli, the taxi having taken us through streets and streets of broken-down mud-brick dirty dwellings full of grubby street urchins – interesting. Bob was spending hours every night flight planning for the next day so was becoming increasingly exhausted from little sleep. The heat has always affected him badly so what sleep he had was intermittent anyway.

All the way from Libya to Cairo seemed to be desert. We kept the sea on our port side and overflowed Tobruk and El Alamein of World War 11 fame, though they were hard to pick out as there wasn't anything much left and we glimpsed Mussolini's Marble Arch from a great height. We had landed for fuel at El Adam amidst RAF jets taking evasive action all around us. We were transmitting blind and had arrived in the middle of a training exercise. On being escorted up to the Tower they soon sussed us up as being aviation idiots rather than spies and didn't make anything of the fact that we'd lobbed into an R.A.F. military airfield without prior authority or radio communication of any sort. They were hospitable and refueled us and off we went. The unfortunate result of taking on jet fuel meant they thought we were in a jet aircraft and somehow Tony Vecchi and his partner, Patwant Singh, got hold of them in their desperate efforts to trace our whereabouts, and were informed that we should be reaching Nairobi within 24 hours. We were supposed to have been cabling home every night to report on our progress, but we decided sleep was a priority. It was amazing how long it took every evening and morning to go through all the aerodrome formalities

and to try and find somewhere to send cables, not being able to communicate very easily, was an additional problem we could do without. Patwant Singh had an electrical goods supply and repair 'duka' (shop) in Nakuru, our local town. He was on the Nakuru Aero Club Committee being an Ex-Indian Air Force pilot. On getting to know Bob, both as a person and an Instructor, he did Bob the honour of allowing Bob to teach his daughter, Api Suri, to fly. This was quite a novel idea in those days as Asian girls, especially Sikhs, were guarded jealously, especially from European males. Api Suri attained her PPL with no problem – she flew well; and was much praised by the Sikh community.

Over the years Bob has refused to continue training two people, much to his then employers' frustration and fury as they were wealthy people. Both managed to get their PPLs with other establishments and both killed themselves shortly thereafter flying themselves. Anyway, when we didn't turn up after the 24 hours as we were still many days away, Mum started to worry. She had received flying training in her youth but didn't know our aircraft only cruised at 90 kts.; And it was Patwant Singh, whom she knew of old, who was supposed to know the answers and it seemed to him that he was being pressed every hour of every day for information he didn't have. Rumour has it that he was the most relieved of all of us when we finally arrived in Nairobi! We wouldn't have been so cavalier in our attitude to cables had we known what was going on.

Cairo Airport was tonight's destination. It was a bit of a worry. The Military Airport was very close to the Civil Airport. We would definitely be shot down if we attempted to land there as Egypt had just finished with the 6-day war and was extremely trigger happy. Our ADF was playing up and Bob was having his usual problems trying to make radio contact, but we did see the pyramids. In the nick of time everything came good. Whew! This was the first time we had occasion to taxi backwards and the procedure drew a wondering crowd. We were then escorted to the terminal by military personnel bristling with weapons, AK 47's slung over their shoulders and revolvers in their belts – a fairly normal sight in many countries in Africa and destined to become even more so. Lack of visas no problem here as there was an airport hotel this side of Customs and Immigration. Next morning, we were escorted to the Briefing room in the Control Tower, once again, by armed soldiers who remained with us until we boarded our plane. On seeing from our flight plan that we intended to cross the desert to Aswan following the Nile river, we were warned not to go anywhere near the Nile because we'd certainly be shot down. This put a bit of a downer on things as we knew if we had to force land too far away from the Nile habitation, we'd certainly not be able to walk out and no-one would come looking for us. We decided to fly a distance from the Nile so that if we had to glide from 10,000ft. we would land reasonably close to some habitation; also hoping they wouldn't have SAMs and were poor shots!



*Libya to Cairo Desert**Present day view of the Nile River from the Cairo Tower in Egypt*

At the end of an 8-hour flight, feeling heavy headed and anoxic, due to being at 10,000ft. for a long period and a fuel drip in the cockpit which had recently materialised, we landed at Aswan. Here our lack of visas caused consternation, especially as we had arrived unannounced due to our radio problems. We were herded into a small room and heard the key turn in the lock. An hour or so later Captain Serafi, our saviour, arrived. They had seen from our passports that Bob was a flying instructor and so they summoned their well-known ex-Flying Instructor, Captain Serafi, who could speak English as he had taught the then Duke of Kent to fly many years ago. Serafi had been instructed to check Bob's claim to be a Flying Instructor and generally keep an eye on us if we seemed genuine. He and Bob got along famously although we didn't believe his claim about the Duke of Kent until he invited us back to his apartment and showed us photos.

He was very kind and hospitable but became a slight problem for me as he kept plying me with very very sweet sweetmeats (Egyptian style) and the more I said, 'no thanks', the more pressing he became as I had to 'eat for two'. Later I was told that saying 'no' meant just the opposite. I have yet to learn how one says "no" and mean it. Although Capt. Serafi was obviously a fairly high up, well to do, Egyptian, his apartment was hideous. He had a family and only a few small square rooms with bare, dirty white, concrete walls. After our cups of tea and sweetmeats Capt. Serafi drove us to the enormous new Cataract Hotel which had over 100 bedrooms (each the size of our present house) but,

as the tourist season hadn't begun, there were only 3 other guests. We rattled about a bit, but it was a magnificent place - Moorish Style and very white, covered in beautiful bougainvillea, overlooking the Nile and a small island in it on which Ali Khan (Rita Hayworth's husband) was buried. Capt. Serafi, some of his friends and a gorgeous girl joined us for dinner - more sweetmeats! Oh dear. The gorgeous girl, Tamara, was an American 'entertainer' - more probably a topless and almost bottomless dancer - who was in the throes of running away from her Saudi Arabian husband. She had met him when he was studying in America. They married and he persuaded her to visit his family in Saudi Arabia. You can imagine what happened. She was bundled into voluminous clothes, including a hijab, and incarcerated in the Women's Quarters. She couldn't speak anything but American and told us she even had to get permission from her father-in-law to see her husband. On enquiring when they were going to return to America, she was told that they were staying in Saudi Arabia. Her husband showed his true colours - a fundamental Muslim. Desperation set in and Tamara finally obtained the family's consent to visit one of her husband's aunts in Cairo. This woman was not a fundamentalist and was sympathetic to Tamara's plight so didn't keep too tight a watch on her. Tamara escaped and had, so far, made her way as far as Aswan. The Egyptian males were very assiduous in their attentions to this beautiful (loose) white female, as their womenfolk, even in the more modernised Egypt, would never have been allowed to wander around unescorted. After dinner (and Bob was

quite inebriated by then) we met the other two hotel residents. We have some very nice American friends, but these were the worst kind of American tourists you read about - very loud, nothing that wasn't American was any good, and their life story (very boring) had to be of paramount importance to us all. Within the first 5 minutes she had even told us that she had made sure to check all her husband's grades at School before she decided to marry him! Bob, in the 'loving everybody' stage said that they simply must come and stay with us if they reached Kenya. The next morning, having breakfasted with them, he couldn't believe he could have been so stupid. Inevitably, in the course of time they did turn up in Kenya. Bob took one look and fled in an extremely cowardly manner, saying he was far too busy flying to deal with them. I was left to try and entertain them on my own, as Tana only being a few weeks old was not much help, but luckily, they only stayed one night. Not one of Bob's finest hours. As you can imagine I left him in no doubt of this!

The European community had given millions to Egypt to build the High Dam on the Nile at Aswan. This meant that the temple of Ramses 11 would be underwater, and further monies had been provided to move this exceptionally important historical edifice to higher ground at Abu Simbel. Capt. Serafi was employed on this project flying people and goods to Abu Simbel. It was quite a difficult feat to move the temple block by block to be erected so that the sun entered the temple and shone on the face of the statue of Ramses 11 at exactly the precise moment that it had in the old position. Capt. Serafi was incredibly





*Present day Cairo Airport in Egypt*

proud of the project, which was within an ace of being opened to the public. They expected to make mega bucks from tourism.

He was most insistent that we break our journey to visit Abu Simbel with him. We explained that we really couldn't as they were desperate for the plane back in Kenya and we asked if he'd be good enough to ensure the refueling bowser would turn up in time for us to take off at the latest by 11 a.m. Any later and it would be dark before we reached Khartoum and the aircraft was not suitable for night flying. Oddly enough, despite all the pleas and pressures we tried, the fuel bowser never arrived! Capt. Serafi remarked that as we were going to have to stay another night it might as well be at Abu Simbel. So, off we flew, in formation with Capt. Serafi, and with Tamara lying on top of the fuel tank just behind our heads. Luckily, she was very slim, but it was quite a work of art to fit her on the 18" space between the fuel tank and the roof and amongst sundry fuel lines - one of which was still leaking. She had hoped we would smuggle her into the Sudan in this fashion but after half an hour's flying to Abu Simbel even her intrepid spirit quailed at the thought of 8 hours of this. We didn't have to tell her it really wasn't feasible. We were entertained royally that night with Tamara the belle of the ball and given in-depth conducted tours of the temple the next day by the Chief

Egyptologist and the Chief Engineer. What a feat and quite fascinating. Something we would never have had the opportunity of seeing without the machinations of Capt. Serafi! The only thing that spoilt the atmosphere of the temple was commercialism - a large tourist restaurant constructed above the dome of the temple. Tamara stayed on in Abu Simbel. Perhaps she couldn't face another half hour on top of the fuel tank, or perhaps it was the adulation she was receiving?

We returned to Aswan for fuel and Customs and managed to take off before 11 a.m. bound for Khartoum. Bob had a good plan. Find the railway at Wadi Halfa and follow it across the Nubian Desert. Wadi Halfa used to be a staging post on the 3-day flights from Kenya to England in an aircraft such as a Viking. On one of these such flights Mum, my girl cousin and I (about 11 years old), were put up by the airline on a houseboat on the Nile. Jenny and I thought it terribly romantic. It was desperately hot, so everything was wide open and there was a continuous parade of Arabs around the decks peering in at the tourists. Mum didn't sleep a wink as she was terrified Jenny, and I were about to be abducted and sold into slavery. We laughed at her of course, but some Arabs in this part of the world are still great slavers. Anyway, the Wadi Halfa airstrip had long since been abandoned as it was about to be submerged by the Aswan High Dam and the water was

already lapping at its edges. The problem was - we couldn't spot the railway as it had been moved, and no way were we going to fly for 8 hours over barren desert with no aids; (the ADF had finally packed in although it wouldn't have been much use most of the way, anyway), or somewhere to force land where we might have some hope of being found. The only answer was to land and obtain some local knowledge about the railway. For some reason I suddenly wanted to go to the loo, so I was glad to land. In all the preceding flights I had been O.K. and Bob had a bottle, if required. It hadn't been. Bob suggested I stay in the aircraft until he'd reconnoitred the situation as everything looked very very dilapidated. After about half an hour he returned striding out determinedly, hopped in and hurriedly started his pre-start up checks. "What about the loo", says I, "I'm about to burst"? "Sorry", says he "you'll have to wait, but smile and wave at everyone". It appeared that there was a problem, and it was imperative we get airborne as soon as possible. During his conversion training it had been made very clear to Bob that if the engine hadn't fired within 10 seconds the interstage turbine temperature would get too hot and the IT would then melt; so, after 10 seconds the starting procedure must be abandoned, and the engine allowed to cool down before a re-attempt.





*Present day view of the Temple of Ramses II, Abu Simbel in Egypt*



*Present day view of the Nile River near Aswan, Egypt*

We had had absolutely no problems so far. Today, of course, would be different. The 10 seconds was approaching, no sign of the engine firing, leave it just a little longer. No good – release starter and close fuel shut-off valve – and the engine fired up. We were still holding our breath as the needle in the IT temperature gauge continued to rise. It reached the red arc and started to hover there. Oh, God, were we about to have a meltdown? Finally, it began to come back, and Bob, starting to breathe again, began to taxi fast – more smiles and waves – as we'd noticed many Arabs in their ragged burnouses with Lawrence of Arabia type flintlock muskets slung over their shoulders walking quickly towards the aero plane; and vehicles appearing in the distance. Bob said that he was going to take to the desert if they drove onto the runway to block our take off. I thought we could well end up in a critical condition in a pile of soft sand if he did that but didn't voice my thoughts as he was obviously determined to attempt a take-off come hell or high water. Once airborne and on track, having found the railway 10 miles inland, he told me the story. He'd found his way to the old Control Tower escorted by a motley collection of skeletons dressed in ragged, once white, burnouses. The Control Tower was obviously being used as a sort of hospital. It was 50 degrees Centigrade or more. There were bodies everywhere, some obviously dying, some palsied, some with limbs amputated, others with open sores of one description or another, and lepers – and all covered with flies. Bob was wondering what horrific disease he might contract from one of these poor wretches. The doctor could

speak a little English and he told Bob where to find the railway. Bob was saying his good-byes thankfully and, without thinking, answered a question saying we had just flown from Aswan. Oh, dear. What a faux pas. The doctor was in a panic. We had come from Egypt and this wasn't a Customs and Immigration Airport. Egypt and Northern Sudan were having border skirmishes with one another. He was going to have to telephone Khartoum for instructions and we certainly couldn't leave until the matter was cleared up. Bob tried to point out that we had to leave immediately or wouldn't make Khartoum before night. The thought of us having to spend any time at all, let alone a night amongst these, possibly, highly infectious people, was a nightmare. When Bob discovered that sometimes they weren't able to telephone Khartoum for days, panic really set in. Luckily Bob is a fast thinker. Although on the odd occasion that Bob has felt he should perhaps lie about something to save himself a little bit of aggro. He has never managed to succeed as it's just not in his nature. (Putting long legs on a good story was not in the same class!). This time, however, he excelled himself. He informed the doctor that he had absolutely nothing to worry about as Bob had already received permission from Khartoum for this special landing to find the railway; and that Khartoum had instructed Bob to check in with them on the radio on pain of death within half an hour; and that Bob couldn't contact them by radio unless he was a few thousand feet up. The doctor didn't know whether to believe Bob or not and was looking dubious, so Bob said he'd write him a letter accepting full responsibility for the

action he was about to take and quickly wrote something to the effect that: I, Captain Bob Needham of The Kenya Government have received permission from Khartoum etc. etc. He handed this missive to the doctor and rushed out saying he was terribly late. He was really in a hurry lest the doctor have second thoughts and try to stop us again, or might, by a fluke, get through to Khartoum and learn about the tissue of lies. How marvelous to be airborne again. My pain gradually got better as I dehydrated. Our euphoria didn't last long. Far ahead was an ominous, evil looking dirty yellow brownish cloud stretching from horizon to horizon. It could only be a sandstorm. What should we do? Some advice had been to fly through it, other that it would wreck the engine. We inclined to the latter, but the only alternative was to land by the railway line. Very fraught – and we hadn't yet seen a single train. The hours passed as we drew ever nearer. No sign of sand in the air but suddenly we were enveloped in an eerie green light and finally realised it was only an inversion layer. What a lot of trauma over nothing. Bob had, all the while, been trying to raise someone on the radio who might have an idea if there was a big sandstorm about. Although every morning before our departure Bob had jotted down radio frequencies for the flight, most of them were unobtainable. We received our landing clearance for Khartoum from Malta Centre, approx. 1,500 miles away, on HF, just as we were joining for landing as dusk settled in. The doctor at Wadi Halfa had obviously got through to Khartoum and we were met by the Airport Commandant. He was, in fact, a charming Arab, so we told him the whole truth and, luckily,





*Present day view overlooking the Nile River from Aswan, Egypt*



*Present day view overlooking the Nile River from Cairo, Egypt*

he must have believed us. He then invited us out to dinner, but Bob said he just couldn't as he was completely exhausted. He then tried to persuade me to go alone. Obviously a white, pregnant, Infidel woman, not hidden away in a bourka, was game for anything! I refrained from saying that I wasn't in the habit of going out to dinner with strange men and politely and very firmly pled exhaustion, as Bob had. This was utterly true. We had a strong feeling we were followed and watched that night but were too tired to care. It certainly would have been excessively boring for any watchers.

The next day our flight to Juba was following the Nile again, as the Southern Sudan was going through one of its peaceful periods, to Malakal. We overflew Malakal and now we were over the Sudd - the miles and miles of swamp as far as the eye could see with nothing to define the actual river. I glanced at Bob who had fallen asleep. 20 minutes later he awoke in a high state of tension. Where were we? How was he to know if I had held my course, the wind may have changed etc. etc. We were both tired and edgy, so we had our first spat. I was incensed that he thought I couldn't hold a course - after all I had been doing it for the last 6 days. Those of you who have known us a while may find this hard to believe but when Bob and I first married, I was utterly prepared to agree to anything he wanted without demur! This time he wanted to go out of our way to find an airfield called Bor, which hadn't been used in decades, to pinpoint our position. He was right, of course, but I felt it was a waste of time, even if it were seeable as an airfield, how would we know it definitely was Bor. Anyway,

when we arrived there spot on, the name **BOR** could be seen as bright as day outlined in whitewashed stones. Sometime later I found **Bor** Airfield in my father's album as he'd been stationed there whilst serving with the Gordon Highlander Regiment. What a hole that must have been. Soldiers serving in the far flung reaches of the Empire had it quite rough at times.

We made an unheralded landing as our radio had finally given up the ghost altogether. Then we had real trouble with an imposing looking, very black, Nubian covered in gold braid who said that, without visas, there was absolutely no possibility we could stay in his 'one-horse town'. We explained very politely over and over again (without losing our cool, which, of course, in the Arabic world or Black Africa, it would be suicidal to do) that we just weren't able to fly in the dark. He didn't care - we had to go. It was an impasse. We were having to prop our eyes open by now and were excessively hungry. We had noticed one of the many down-and-out looking people hanging around, listening. He came up, spoke a few words in a Sudanese dialect to gold braid, turned to us and said in very good English that we were welcome to stay. Just goes to show that attire does not always show true colours. Once again, we were invited to dine with this guy. It's obviously an easy way to keep an eye on foreigners. We felt we had to accept and went to our room to freshen up. It was like a tower - the ceiling fan was so high up we could hardly see it and it certainly didn't have any effect. We lay down in a lather of sweat just for a minute to rest knowing it was far too hot ever to be able to sleep.

That was it. The next morning, we awoke in horror at having been so rude to our benefactor. Bob obviously did have some sort of a sleep though he said he'd been chased all night by howling whirling dervishes and Egyptian Mummies, and, as a consequence, was feeling as ropy as hell. The gentleman in question was very pleasant about our rude lapse. Obviously, someone had looked in on us, and probably even tried to wake us up. After 7 days' continuous flying, several of them including 8 hours' non-stop airtime; hours of flight planning, battles with various Airport officials, battles with the radio, a smelly fuel drip, not to mention a few highly tense moments, we were beginning to feel the heat!

This was our final leg - Juba to Nairobi. Whoopee! Hold on, we don't have a working radio. International flights are especially heinous without one. It took us about 2 minutes flat to decide we weren't hanging around in this furnace like hell hole for days awaiting the possible advent of an avionics mechanic. Suddenly the ADF decides to work, indicating a strong signal at Gulu in Uganda. This was excellent - another good pinpoint on track. No airfield shown. Just a strong beacon. Over Gulu we looked down. To our complete horror there was an airfield with several lines of Russian MIG 17 aircraft jets. Obviously, this was Idi Amin of Uganda's secret base. We were terrified as we suddenly saw 2 MIGs lined up in formation about to take off. We couldn't hightail it out of there at 90kts. so just had to sit it out, hoping against hope that they weren't coming to look at us. Bob, being his usual pessimistic self, was convinced



this was the end! We decided we'd rather be shot down than end up as spies in a Black African gaol. That would be an unthinkable unspeakable fate. It had happened to an innocent pilot we knew, who had been temporarily unsure of his position. As we are here, you will have surmised that we weren't seen! We now had Lake Victoria (the third largest lake in the world) in sight - or should have. Instead, there was a blue/black curtain reaching up to the heavens - one of Lake Victoria's dreaded storms in which no light aircraft could survive. We'd have to by-pass it but if it took us too far out of our way, there could be a fuel problem and we might have to land at a country airfield in Kenya, well known to us, at Eldoret. We'd be in big trouble but would be at home and could sort it out. The light-headedness at being on home ground started to kick in. Luckily the storm moved west, not east, and Bob decided to christen Kisumu with the only bottle he had used. I thought this a bit harsh as Bob had enjoyed instructing at Kisumu, except for the heat and humidity! The weather started to get worse the nearer we got to Nairobi, but we were home - we were invincible - so we flew along almost on the deck in weather we'd never normally contemplate flying in. We were lucky and having joined overhead and received a green light from the Tower, we landed. Before we had a chance to have a cup of tea, Bob was summoned to the Tower and subjected to a tirade from the Canadian Air Traffic Controller for flying into Wilson Airport without a radio. He has not been keen on Canadian Air Traffic Controllers ever since. There was one who was a bit suss. in his eyes in Tamworth. He heard nothing more from the D.C.A. Having stated in his report that we lost radio contact over halfway along this flight, and he just continued in accordance with his flight plan as is normal procedure. The fact that they had received no flight plan from Juba was par for the course. Oh, well. That would not have been unusual. We then slept for 48 hours non-stop. I have often wondered if Tana's soul decided at some point on the flight that, if it were lucky enough ever to see the light of day, it would deal with any vicissitudes it might meet in this life with the calmness and fortitude for which she is known!

**Phoebe-Ann Needham**



*Present day view of the city of Nairobi in Kenya, East Africa*

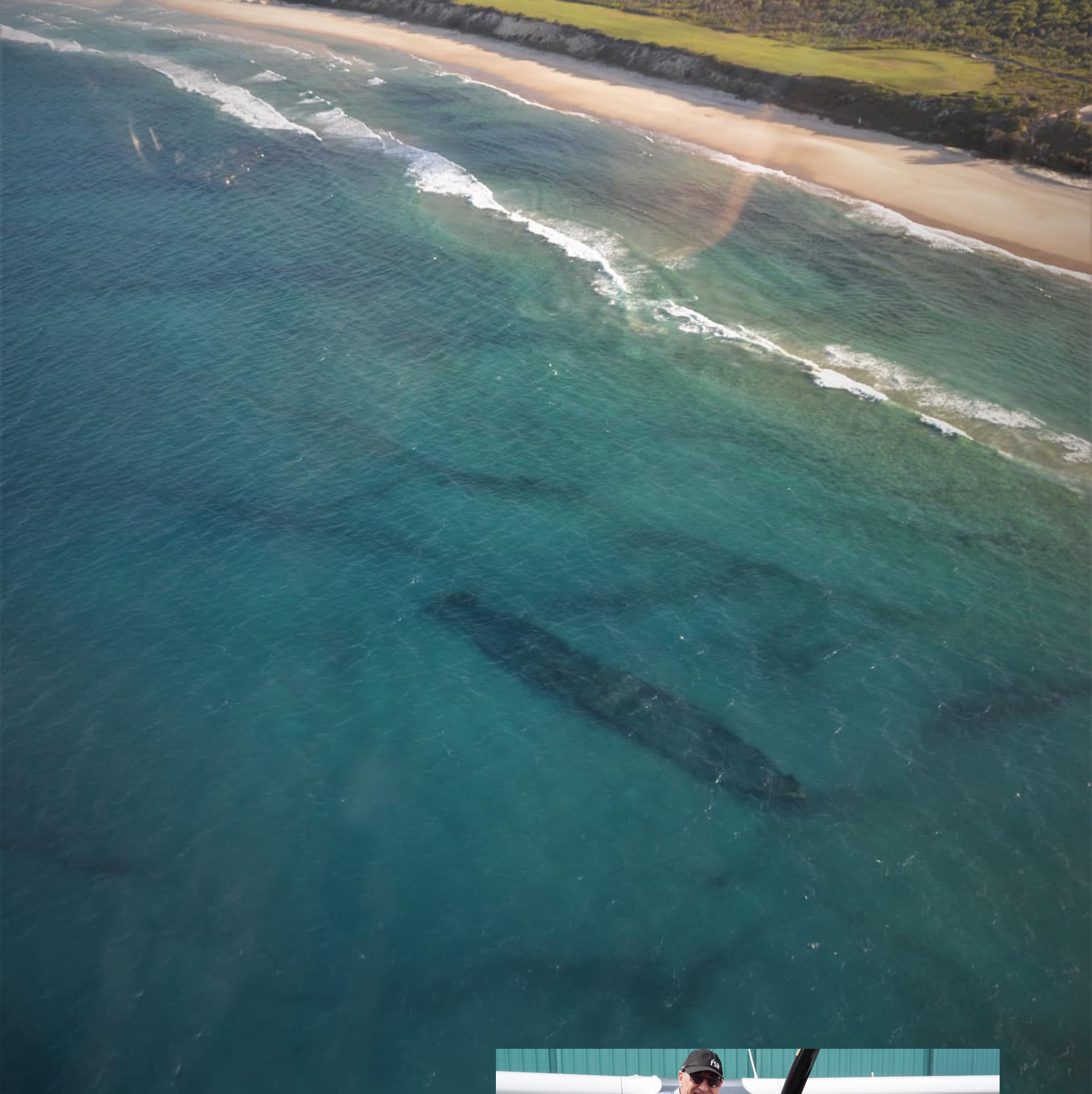


*A Common beautiful African sunset*



*Phoebe-Ann Needham*





## SS MARLOO SHIPWRECK

The SS Marloo was a steel steamer of 2628 tonnes. Formerly the "Francesco Crispi", it was constructed in Newcastle on Tyne, England, in 1891. Purchased by the Adelaide Steamship Company, the Marloo collided with Sandy Cape Shoal, just north of Fraser Island, began taking on water, and then was beached on the Island on 27th September 1914. All crew and passengers were rescued, and it was later decided the collision had occurred due to the Captain's negligence.



*Gayle Kee spotted the SS Marloo shipwreck on 19 January 2021, from her light aircraft on K'gari. A very rare sighting!*

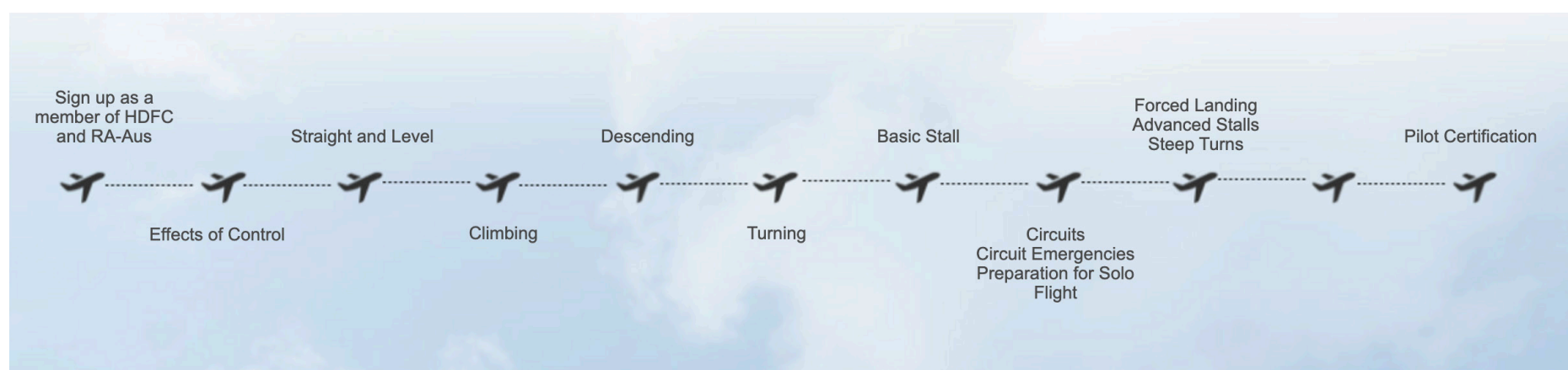


# FLYING TRAINING IN PORT MACQUARIE

The Hastings District Flying Club (Port Macquarie Recreational Aviation) is a leader in Recreational Flying Training specialising in professional pilot development.

Our enthusiastic team of highly professional and experienced flying instructors draws on experience from many facets of aviation and will ensure that your flying training is conducted thoroughly, professionally and to the highest standards.

Training is conducted at Port Macquarie Airport (YPMQ) in a friendly atmosphere.



## TYPES OF FLYING TRAINING AT HDFC

### Trial Instructional Flight (TIF):

A Discovery Flight is a fantastic way to experience what flying is all about. With one of our professional flight instructors at your side, you will actually get to fly our aircraft! During a 30 to 40 minute hands-on flight, you will learn the basics of taxiing, take-off and maintaining straight and level flight. Best of all, you can log the flight time in your pilot's logbook if you decide to continue training. Costs \$150 when flying in the Sling.

### Pilot Certificate:

Pilot training course conducted in accordance with the RA-AUS Operations Manual.

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- Formation
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- Nose Wheel
- Controlled Airspace (available when approved by RA-Aus and CASA)

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If you are an existing GA pilot, why not think about gaining your Recreational Pilot Certificate. Minimum 5 hours including 1 hour solo.

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An excellent course for partners of pilots who fly regularly in the right hand seat. We will teach you aeroplane handling skills, how to land and emergency procedures.

### Ground Courses

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- Navigation and Meteorology
- \* Ground courses are subject to minimum number requirements

**Estimated Cost to obtain a Recreational Aviation Pilot Certificate (total estimated at \$5,000 minimum)**

**HDFC membership (must have):**  
\$100/year.

**RAAus membership (must have):**  
under 18 \$179 per year; over 18 \$250 per year plus \$22 joining fee.

**Basic Aeronautical Knowledge Theory Kit (BAK):**  
\$100.

**Ground briefings (must do) 12 topics, about 12-15 hours:**  
\$30/hr

**Aircraft hire (at least 20 air instruction hours on Sling) 5% discount available for 10 hours pre-paid:**  
\$150/hr

**Instructor (approximately 20-25 hours):**  
\$70/hr

**What aircraft do we train in?**  
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For more course details contact:  
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## HDFC OPEN DAY

View our aircraft and sign up for flights

### OPEN DAY EVENT DETAILS

The Hastings District Flying Club will open its club house and hangar doors to the public.

P.S. We will reveal the newly refurbished hangar then.

Members will be showing off their aircraft on the tarmac and you can sign up for flights. People can wander around and view the different aircraft we have within the club, and they can also talk with the owner and, in some instances, the person who actually built it. The clubhouse and hangar will house historical presentations, radio control models, plastic aircraft models and flying training information.

Remember to sign up for a discovery flight. View our display at HDFC club house and understand our 60 plus years aviation history.

Limited show bags giveaways and prizes to be won

#### When?

Sunday, April 18, 2021 at  
9AM - 3 PM

#### Where?

Hastings District Flying Club  
+ HDFC Flying School,  
Oliver Dr, Port Macquarie Airport,  
NSW 2444

#### Entry

Free Entry  
Duration 6 hrs

#### Questions?

Contact Rod Davison on  
T: 0419 632 477 or  
E: [president@hdfc.com.au](mailto:president@hdfc.com.au)



**WIN A FLIGHT!**





## CFI REPORT

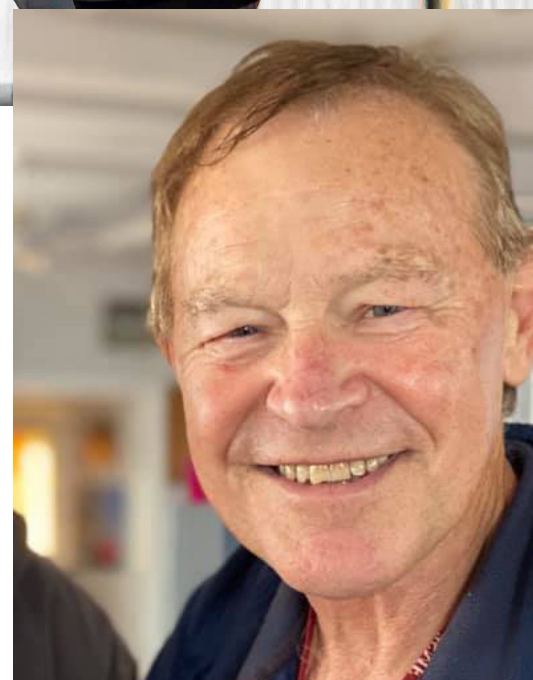
On November 17 2020 I very proudly took over the role once again of being the CFI for HDFC. I feel extremely privileged and humble to be of service to HDFC and RAAus in this important position for our Flight Training School.

Firstly I want to acknowledge the dedicated and sterling job that Steve Smith has done over the last four years in his role as CFI. Its a job he didn't really want to have but he immediately accepted it when the club needed him most.

Subsequently, he has faithfully carried out all of the tasks required of the CFI and many more because he always holds the club at the forefront, regardless of how he feels. For this service, Steve, we truly thank you.

All members of HDFC have a role to play in the continuance of safe, sensible and responsible flying. This includes the careful handling of our two outstanding aircraft while still on the ground. Some serious and expensive damage has been done in recent times by carelessness or lack of knowledge on how to manoeuvre the aircraft while inside or outside the hangar.

Please ask one of the instructors if you're not sure of the correct procedure or just out of currency and you don't feel confident. Remember its always wise to have someone else assist you when moving an aircraft so that an extra set of eyes can watch out for the wing tips and the rudder.



Ray Lind,  
CFI



We must also be very careful when getting into the aircraft as well as exiting. You must keep your weight totally forward while using your hands and knees to move on the black surface only. All of the metal on our lightweight aircraft is very thin and easily damaged.

You must also remember to never put your whole weight on the stirrup or there is a real danger of the aircraft tipping back and striking the tail and the rudder on the ground. It's the pilot's responsibility to make sure that this does not happen!

When fuelling the aircraft remember we **MUST** be **OUTSIDE** the hangar, at least **9 metres** from an unsealed building (our open hangar) and at least **6 metres** from a stationary aircraft.

All of our actions concerning the aircraft need to continue in the most **Professional Manner Possible**. The brand name of HDFC is paramount and professionalism must always be upheld in all of our actions. This includes: Individual Member Flying, Flying Training, PPD Flying or just General Behaviour. People watch us very carefully and this general scrutiny must simply be an incentive for us to do everything in an even more considered and careful manner. We must all look out for each other and help out if we can see anything which could bring the HDFC into disrepute.

If any of our pilots are not sure about anything concerning the operation of our aircraft, local procedures, radio calls or indeed if you are just lacking in confidence; please talk to any of our instructors or do a check flight to help allay your fears and remain as one of our valued pilots.

The best and cheapest way for everyone to maintain currency is simply to fly in the monthly Pilot Proficiency Day (PPD) which continues to cost each pilot only \$100 an hour. This very generous gesture by the club is designed to help keep our pilots current at minimal cost. There is no excuse for any active pilot to be out of currency!

On Wednesday, 16 December RAAus carried out an Audit for HDFC. Cody Calder, (Innovation and Improvement) checked through a selected number of Student Records, Instructor Log Books as well as training procedures and documents used by HDFC.

Jared Smith, (Airworthiness and Maintenance) while in discussions with Doug, checked our training aircraft, all maintenance records and paperwork. After several hours of thoroughly checking documents, these two gentlemen then sat down with Steve, Doug and myself and gave us a report on their findings.

In fact they found only very minor issues on which to comment at all which really amounted to giving us some advice on how to enhance some of our paper work and to make sure that instructors' log books accurately reflect the lessons given to the students.. In fact their comment to us was that:

**"....if all Flying Schools we visit and audit were as good and straight forward as HDFC,  
our lives would be a whole lot easier!"**

As a result, I think we should all take great pride in how we operate our school as a group, the professionalism of its instructors and the high quality of the students trained by HDFC.

As always we must always be vigilant as a group and if we see any problem or potential problem, it's in everyone's interest to speak up and keep everything running as smoothly and efficiently as possible.

During the last month we of course have had the disruption of the Christmas Holidays as well as more than normal rainfall. Despite the extremely wet weather we've experienced, we have managed to do plenty of flying in between showers and it's a real indictment of the popularity of the Sling 2 aircraft as well as the dedication of our instructors.

A very high volume of Pilot Training continues at HDFC in 2021. Last year we sent a record sixteen (16) students on their first solo and this year we're already off to a great start with our scholarship students taking advantage of the school holidays and doing a huge amount of flying.

The aircraft hire rate will increase by \$10 per hour from 1st March.

We all look forward to a very enjoyable, safe and busy flying year ahead for HDFC.

Safe, Happy Landings for 2021.

**Ray Lind, CFI**



*Scholarship student, Jayden Barker did his first solo and took only 8.9 hours. Remarkable feat from an outstanding student.*



# Captain's Report



## JULY FLYING COMPETITION 2020

By RAY LIND,  
Club Captain Hastings District Flying Club

We enjoyed fine, calm weather for our July Flying Competition, 2020. Several of our regular pilots were away so we only had five (5) pilots take advantage of the HDFC cheap flying rates to help maintain proficiency and currency for our members.

### BLIND CIRCUIT / SPOT LANDING

In this exercise we cover the instrument panel to simulate a total instrument failure and the pilot has to fly a perfect circuit gauging heights and speeds using outside visual references only. The pilot then has to finish with a perfect landing in the scoring box. This activity shows the pilot that flight can take place perfectly safely despite a total instrument failure.

Our highest scoring pilots were:

1st Rod Davison 117 pts, 2nd David Mitchell 107 pts, 3rd Jon Bown 54 pts.

### RIVER BASH

This exercise involves a coordinated Flying Exercise up the Maria River at exactly 600'. The pilot has to keep the aircraft in balance with the rudder (extremely important at low level) during some steep turns whilst maintaining a position exactly over the middle of the river. This is great fun but does require some intense concentration from the pilot.

1st Rod Davison 53 pts, 2nd David Mitchell 51 pts, 3rd Jon Bown pts.

### FORCED LANDING

This exercise simulates a total engine failure and the pilot has to glide the aircraft safely to a suitable landing area while going through all of the trouble checks.

1st Rod Davison 50 pts, 2nd David Mitchell 45 pts, 3rd Jon Bown 36 pts.

### BONUS POINTS

These points are gained for perfect landings regardless of whether the pilot is in the scoring boxes. The landing has to be smooth and take place with the column hard back whilst maintaining a position exactly in the middle of the runway to score a maximum of 20 points for each landing.

Our impressive pilots today were: (Max 40pts)

1st Rod Davison and David Mitchell both on 20 pts. 2nd Jon Bown 10pts.

### OVERALL

1st With some very impressive and accurate flying was David Mitchell 226 points.

2nd Rod Davison 220 points.

3rd Jon Bown 149 points.

Congratulations to all of our pilots who participated in this important day's flying to help maintain proficiency, currency and confidence.



1st was David Mitchell 226 points.  
With some very impressive and accurate flying



2nd Rod Davison 220 points.



# Captain's Report

## AUGUST FLYING COMPETITION 2020

By RAY LIND,  
Club Captain Hastings District Flying Club

The weather for our August Flying Competition PPD totally lived up to its reputation of delivering 'August Westerlies'! For most of the day we experienced crosswinds of 270 degrees at 15 knots so it certainly got our pilots' attention. However, while flying the Sling 2 aircraft and using the correct crosswind technique, safe, smooth landings really shouldn't present a huge difficulty. Of course flying with instructors on our Pilot Proficiency Days (PPDs) also gives all of our flying members the opportunity to experience unusual weather conditions where normally they wouldn't have the confidence to fly. So our pilots can get instant help and guidance if necessary, all at a cost of only \$100 an hour. Any pilot who doesn't take advantage of this extremely generous offer by HDfC is really letting themselves down and failing to maintain their piloting and currency skills.

### PARTIAL ENGINE FAILURE / SPOT LANDING

In this exercise we simulated a partial engine failure with the engine producing only 3000RPM at the beginning of the downwind leg. The pilot must immediately revert to the BEST GLIDE SPEED for the aircraft and then complete an abbreviated circuit, aiming to land within the large touchdown marker.

Our highest scoring pilots today were:

1st Rod Davison 82 pts, 2nd Craig Whiting 60 pts, 3rd John Cleland 57 pts

### RIVER BASH

(Coordinated Flying Exercise up the Maria River at 600')

This exercise is lots of fun for the pilot but more importantly it teaches the importance of the correct use of the rudder during steep turns at a low altitude. Low level flying like this requires intense concentration from the pilot.

1st Rod Davison 62 pts, 2nd Mark Crawford and Craig Whiting 56 pts, 3rd John Cleland and David Mitchell 53 pts.

### FORCED LANDING

A total engine failure or a partial engine failure, although extremely rare, can occur at any time. This exercise allows the pilot to practise the essential emergency checks (saying them out loud) as well as being able to choose and judge a satisfactory landing position on the ground with confidence and complete accuracy. The Sling glides very well, provided the pilot maintains the exact best glide speed of 72 knots.

1st John Cleland and Rod Davison 43 pts, 2nd David Mitchell 41 pts, 3rd Craig Whiting 39 pts.

### BONUS POINTS

Landing an aircraft is always regarded as the most difficult and skilful part of the flying exercise and is certainly the skill that students have the most difficulty in learning. Also, the strong crosswinds experienced for our August PPD made all landings quite challenging, so it was difficult to gain bonus

points for perfect landings.

Our impressive pilots today were:

1st John Cleland 20 pts. (The Maximum bonus points would be 40 pts)

2nd Rod Davison 10 pts.

### OVERALL

For our Flying Comp. PPDs, we incorporate a handicap system where each pilot who wins per month will attract a ten point penalty. Rod Davison has already won two comps so he's on a 20 point handicap. However, after handicaps were deducted Rod Davison still came out with the highest point score. The winners were:

1st Rod Davison 177 points.

2nd John Cleland 163 points.

3rd Craig Whiting 155 points.

Well done to all of our participating pilots.



1st Rod Davison 177 points



2nd John Cleland 163 points



# Captain's Report

## SEPTEMBER FLYING COMPETITION 2020

By RAY LIND,  
Club Captain Hastings District Flying Club

We enjoyed reasonably fine weather for our September Flying Competition, 2020 with the usual slight crosswinds and bumps. We had six (6) pilots take advantage of the HDFC cheap flying rates to help maintain proficiency and currency for our members. This was also a partial practice exercise for the Tri Club event to be held next month at Taree.

### BLIND CIRCUIT / SPOT LANDING

In this exercise we cover the instrument panel to simulate a total instrument failure and the pilot has to fly a perfect circuit gauging heights and speeds using outside visual references only. To vary this exercise slightly we maintained height at 1000' until the turn onto final approach. The pilot then had to decide when he could glide successfully on finals and land on the big white marker scoring box. This activity shows the pilot that flight can take place perfectly safely despite a total instrument failure.

Our highest scoring pilots were:

1st Rod Davison 88 pts, 2nd Jon Bown 77 pts, 3rd John Cleland 59 pts.

### RIVER BASH

This exercise involves a coordinated Flying Exercise up the Maria River at exactly 600'. The pilot has to keep the aircraft in balance with the rudder (extremely important at low level) during some steep turns whilst maintaining a position exactly over the middle of the river. This is great fun but does require some intense concentration from the pilot.

1st John Cleland 62 pts, 2nd Rod Davison 56 pts, 3rd Jon Bown 42 pts.

### STEEP TURNS

While executing steep turns of 45 degrees, the pilot has to maintain height while keeping the aircraft in balance during the whole exercise.

1st Rod Davison 55 pts, John Cleland 50 pts, 3rd Jon Bown and Mark Watson 35 pts.

### FORCED LANDING

This exercise simulates a total engine failure and the pilot has to glide the aircraft safely to a suitable landing area while going through all of the trouble checks.

1st Mark Watson 85 pts, 2nd Rod Davison 74 pts, 3rd John Cleland 38 pts.

### BONUS POINTS

These points are gained for perfect landings regardless of whether the pilot is in the scoring boxes. The landing has to be smooth and take place with the column hard back whilst maintaining a position exactly in the middle of the runway to score a maximum of 20 points for each landing.

Our impressive pilots today were: (Max 40pts)

1st Mark Watson 40 pts. 2nd Rod Davison and John Cleland 10 pts.

### OVERALL

We use a handicap system for our PPD Flying where previous winners are given a ten (10) point handicap for each month that they win for the year. Rod Davison has already won three (3) times so he is on a 30 point handicap so far this year.

1st With some totally outstanding and accurate flying once again was Rod Davison with 253 points. This was also with his 30 point handicap subtracted! Well done Rod.  
2nd Mark Watson 245 points.  
3rd John Cleland 209 points.

**Congratulations to all of our pilots who participated in this important day's flying to help maintain proficiency, currency and confidence.**



1st Rod Davison 253 points



2nd Mark Watson 245 points



# Captain's Report

## TRI CLUB FLYING COMPETITION OCTOBER 2020

By RAY LIND,  
Club Captain Hastings District Flying Club

The Tri club competition for 2020 was held at Taree Airfield and hosted by Manning River Aero Club. Taree airfield was very quiet with minimal traffic to interfere with the competition sequences. This is a wonderful venue for this event and the weather proved to be perfect for flying until the last few competitors had to contend with a brisk crosswind. Next year HDFC will host the competition at YKMP.

### THE THREE FLYING ACTIVITIES STAGED WERE:

The River Bash, Steep Turns and a Forced Landing back onto the field. HDFC had six (6) pilots compete, the Kempsey Flying Club (KFC) had seven (7) and the Manning River Aero Club (MRAC) had three (3) pilots compete. Unfortunately Royal Newcastle Aero Club weren't able to field a team to compete, which was very disappointing.

Kempsey Flying Club proved just a little too strong for HDFC on the day. KFC proudly accepted the perpetual trophy and will hold it for the next year.

### THE OVERALL TRI CLUB RESULTS WERE:

KFC 404 points  
HDFC 397 points  
MRAC 293 points

The Tri club was also the normal October Flying PPD day for HDFC.

### AFTER NORMAL MONTHLY HANDICAPS WERE APPLIED WE HAD THE FOLLOWING RESULTS:

1st Bruce Dunlop 129 pts  
2nd David Mitchell 121 pts  
3rd Rod Davison 117 points.

Next year, the Tri Club will be hosted by HDFC and because of the normal security restrictions and generally high traffic situation at Port Macquarie, we will hold the event at Kempsey Airport. We're hoping for a much larger contingent of pilots to attend this important flying event next year.



HDFC members at the Manning River Aero Club



Overall Tri Club Flying Competition Winner - Kempsey Flying Club (KFC)





# Captain's Report

## 2020 HDFC AWARDS

By RAY LIND,  
Club Captain Hastings District Flying Club

The Hastings District Flying Club recognises the achievements of our student pilots as well as our seasoned pilots for outstanding flying.

And now onto our very important student flying awards for 2020.

### FIRST SOLO FLIGHT (MUG AND CERTIFICATE)

First phase of the flying training syllabus. An exciting, challenging and memorable time for all pilots.

The one we never forget. This year we had fifteen (15) pilots gain this wonderful achievement of reaching First Solo status.

- |                                  |                                  |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Charles Hopley 20.1.20.       | 9. Dior Toppazzini 29.8.20.      |
| 2. Abbey Sheather-Welsh 29.1.20. | 10. Jazz Gooch 14.9.20.          |
| 3. Jonathan Hopley 5.6.20.       | 11. Nick Harvey 24.9.20.         |
| 4. Jared Chapman 15.6.20.        | 12. Harry Freudenstein 17.10.20. |
| 5. Alex Stathis 15.6.20.         | 13. Bodhi Hinchcliffe 4.11.20.   |
| 6. Jabyn Beddoe 3.7.20.          | 14. Steve Schwartz 5.11.20.      |
| 7. Jacob Dowd 12.7.20.           | 15. Riley Langdon 5.11.20.       |
| 8. Harley Sirovica 23.7.20.      |                                  |



Father and Son, Charles and Jonathan Hopley with their awards. Charles has purchased a Sling aircraft. How exciting for them!



Girls fly high. Dior Toppazzini and Jazz Gooch, 15 year old girls achieving their first solo certificates.



Abbey Sheather-Welsh receiving her First Solo Certificate



### PILOT CERTIFICATE (WINGS AND CERTIFICATE)

We have five (5) students who can now proudly call themselves pilots. They earned their pilot wings after going through all of the flight training exercises covering the full syllabus, passing challenging exams and flight tests.

1. Chris Munro 13.3.20.
2. Charles Hopley 02.10.20.
3. Jonathan Hopley 08.10.20
4. Abbey Sheather-Welsh 11.11.20
5. David Gray 26.11.20

### STUDENT PILOT OF THE YEAR

All of our students have worked very hard to gain their qualifications. It doesn't just happen. It can only be achieved by hard work and dedication. Many problems are encountered along the way in gaining your pilot's certificate and this often takes a great deal of perseverance by the student to overcome individual difficulties.

Our Student Pilot of the year 2020 is Jacob Dowd



### PASSENGER ENDORSEMENT (CERTIFICATE)

1. Chris Munro 28.5.20.
2. Gavin Law 30.06.20.
3. Charles Hopley 11.10.20

### CROSS COUNTRY CERTIFICATE

1. Nicolas Tessede 18.2.20.

### SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENTS (EXTREMELY CHALLENGING)

1. Command Instrument Rating - John Cleland,
2. Gyrocopter First Solo - David Massey.

### SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

We have two (2) scholarship winners this year, and this of course can lead into a flying career or indeed a lifetime achievement accomplishment of gaining a Pilot's Licence.

1. Jayden Barker.
2. Liam Ross.



Jacob Dowd, Student Pilot of the year 2020



Moving on to our Pilot Proficiency Day also known as our Monthly Flying Competition. On these days we practice flying sequences that simply follow on from our flying training.

Pilots practice emergency procedures such as Forced Landings with Total Engine Failures as well as Partial Engine Failures. They also have fun challenging themselves with the coordinated flying exercise known as the River Bash up the Maria River at 600' as well as Spot Landing exercises with and without the use of flaps.

By doing these exercises consistently, our pilots get very confident and proficient in their flying. With some mentoring guidance from either Bruce or myself as air judges, it doesn't take long to become an expert.

The best part about these days also is that it only costs you \$100 an hour for your flying. Every pilot in our club should be taking advantage of this wonderful gesture from HDFC. As always, everyone gains from flying in the competitions. Benefits: currency, confidence, safety, comradeship to every pilot to maintain skills.

This year we have continued to use a 20 point bonus score for each landing regardless of whether it is in a scoring box or not to improve the quality of our landings overall.

To gain the 20 points the aircraft must touchdown exactly in the RWY centre, straddling the white line with the column well back with the nose high in the air, while protecting the vulnerable nose wheel.

This is working well for our pilots and is an important reminder to everyone as it's very easy with the Sling to fall into a very dangerous habit of landing too flat and subsequently striking the nose wheel first which of course would bring disastrous consequences for our little aeroplane and indeed the pilot.

In addition we have also incorporated into the scoring system the 'self brief' prior to takeoff in case of a total engine failure or partial engine failure as well as holding the column hard back for ALL TAXIING to remind everyone to help keep the weight and shock stress off the nose wheel.

#### SPOT LANDING PROFICIENCY

The Spot Landing usually takes place at the end of one of our circuit exercises such as a blind circuit where we cover the instrument panel simulating a total instrument failure, a partial engine failure or a low level bad weather circuit. It is for judgement in quality landings as well as gaining scoring boxes on the ground.

Gaining third highest score on four (4) points was Mark Watson. Coming equal second for the Spot Landing exercise for the year on eight (8) points were: John Cleland and David Mitchell. However gaining the highest points with a long lead on seventeen (17) points was Rod Davison.

#### FORCED LANDING PROFICIENCY

(Judging occurs for accurate flying while doing all of the required checks to cover a simulated total engine failure and to complete the exercise with a perfect landing in the scoring boxes).

Gaining third highest points for 2020 on six (6) points was David Mitchell. Coming equal second on eight (8) points we had John Cleland and Mark Watson. However with a long lead once again on nineteen (19) points was Rod Davison

#### PROFICIENCY PILOT FOR THE YEAR (VERN POLLEY MEMORIAL TROPHY)

The overall winner of our PPDs has proven competence and currency in all sequences.

Gaining third highest score for the year on seven (7) points was David Mitchell. Coming second on nine (9) points was John Cleland. However once again with a very long lead on seventeen (17) points we had the maestro himself, Rod Davison.



Mark Watson and Bruce Dunlop  
barmen for the night



Veronica with 91 year old pilot,  
Geoff Litchfield



HDFC Awards night, 2020



### PILOT OF THE YEAR

Our pilot of the year for 2020 was a very clear choice. Dr David Cooke!

Without doubt he is a brilliant pilot, he is a flying doctor, did a helicopter solo last year, he also added gyrocopters to his flying repertoire this year, he is deeply involved with flying in the Bobcat formation every Saturday morning, he has owned about 14 aeroplanes over the years, (Liz, his wife has always been told 'this is the last!') And that was about 10 aeroplanes ago!

David always explains his love of flying as being a disease! He is from a long list of pilots with his grandfather having gained a very early Australian Flying licence flew in WW1, his father flew Spitfires in WW2, and David has two sons who both fly commercially all over the world. As well as flying twice a week in his Beechcraft Bonanza to his Medical Practice in S.W. Rocks, he can't wait for his days off to fly his de Havilland Chipmunk; just for the pure pleasure of it!

In recognition of David's many achievements over the years, in 2020, David also received the very high award of the Order Of Australia for services to Aviation and Medicine. It is with great pleasure that we humbly present David with the HDFC Pilot of the Year award for 2020 David Cooke



*David Cooke, Pilot of the Year 2020*

### CLUB PERSON OF THE YEAR

Club Person of the year 2020 is Steve Smith.

Four years ago our CFI lost his medical. No medical means no CFI therefore no flying training club in stride.

Steve was persuaded to take on the role as acting CFI. He accepted the role for the good of the club.

Steve is an aero club sort of guy. TRUE TO SAY HDFC is second home to Steve. Apart from CFI duties, he is always willing to lend a hand. He spends much time here supporting the club in all its activities. Always available for social functions, washing, collecting aircraft fuel and even putting out chairs for CASA safety seminars.

He is very supportive and encouraging of our young students.

Thank you Steve, a very deserving recipient of Club Person of the Year.



*Steve Smith, Club Person of the Year 2020*



### SPECIAL AVIATOR AWARD

We've incorporated a Special Aviator Award for this year, 2020. One of our colleagues works tirelessly for our club gaining very little thanks and quite often the opposite with lots of criticism.

This dedicated member is our President, Rod Davison. Rod also has that same flying disease that afflicts David Cooke. This year he has easily shown himself to be the most proficient pilot for HDFC and in addition he's consistently flown all over Australia to various aviation events as well as overseas to NZ and UK and of course many repeat trips to Oshkosh.

Rod as we all know is a very good organiser and he quietly goes about keeping our club running smoothly in almost every area. He is often involved in settling difficult situations with his sensible advice and decisions. He spends many hours working out timetables as well as organising personnel.

Rod, as our President has a very difficult and mostly thankless job; while he is always quick to heap praise on others who carry out a particular task for the club. Rod is the main reason why our club functions at such an efficient level.

It is with great pleasure and a huge THANK YOU, we present Rod Davison with the SPECIAL AVIATOR AWARD!



*Rod Davison with all his 2020 Awards!*

### STIRRER OF THE YEAR 2020

Last year, I was the custodian of this stirrer spoon and so was given this task to select and award this spoon to the most deserving stirrer. It's not easy.

In HDFC 62 years history, we have seen a number of stirrers. Some more "popular" than others. You run the names here on this stirrer spoon and you will notice some are just perpetual stirrers. They go on forever and some you might have a love hate relationship with them.

Luckily for HDFC, I would say most stirrers are good stirrers. They stir clockwise meaning they stir in the direction where HDFC can progress with time and because they feel what they say is important for the club.

There's one person in particular who fits this bill. Sure he pisses people off along the way by being so direct but if you take time to understand the shit he stirs then you would learn a lot from him. So I urge you to listen and digest them with a pinch of salt and perhaps you might learn a thing or two and become better pilots.

So 2020 Stirrer of the Year Award goes to this very direct person with years of stirring experience, Bob Needham!



*Bob Needham receiving the Stirrer of the Year 2020 Award from Veronica Lind*

**Veronica Lind**



Fran and Steve enjoyed a local coastal flight on 10 Jan 2021 to celebrate clocking up 20,000 hours in 59 years of flying!



## STEVE SMITH RAMBLINGS

### SAFETY IS NO ACCIDENT

Every day we fly we break a chain of events that can lead to an accident. We do aircraft inspections, check the weather etc and decide whether to fly or not. It usually takes 4 or 5 events lining up that will eventuate in an unfortunate accident.

A good example is the infamous QANTAS ONE overrun at Bangkok airport. I can honestly say in 20,000 hours of flying I have never had a bad landing. (Remember a good landing is one where you get to use the aircraft again.)

However, I did have a bad take-off at Goulburn Airport 1964. We were doing a Commercial Pilot navex in a straight up tail Cessna 172. On board was an instructor and 3 low hour trainees. I had all of 80 hours. The plan was to land at Canberra Airport. The aircraft was only equipped with HF radio. That was ok because Canberra Tower was listed as being able to receive HF.

However, when the time came to get a clearance nothing was heard. As we had just passed Goulburn we doubled



*Safety is no accident, Picture of broke aircraft from 1964*

back to land and spend the night. The aerodrome at that time was more like a paddock with two poorly marked grass strips.

Next morning we loaded up, taxied out and lined up on what I thought was the same strip. Unfortunately it was the shorter muddier of the two strips. I was always taught that you didn't use a flap in a crosswind so as there was a 10kt crosswind I elected to take-off with zero flap. We must have been overweight with four adults and baggage but nobody used to check that sort of thing in those days. I remember pulling the aircraft off

the ground as the far fence came up. The next thing that happened was the aircraft cleared the fence but then stalled and landed heavily in the next paddock taking out another fence and stopping in a ditch. Luckily very little aircraft damage and no injuries apart from my ego.

Wait for it .....My instructor was sitting in the back seat helplessly watching all this happen!

A true story!

**Steve Smith**





## WELCOME NEW HDFC MEMBERS

### JULY

Mark Al Klanani  
Harry Freudenstein  
Steven Schwartz  
Richard Toppazzini Social  
Chai Tanya Randive

### SEPTEMBER

Jack Hazelton-Kelly  
Chester Bird  
Errol Pilemer  
Mathew Mullens  
Patrick Mcdonnell

### NOVEMBER

Adrian Foxx  
Julian Gilmore  
Michael Collins  
Brett Skinner  
Naveen Lingaiah  
Stephan Tessede  
John Fisher Social  
Wayne Boatwright  
Dough Ross  
Oliver Taylor  
Chris Hoolahan  
Caleb Butterfield

### DECEMBER

Jayden Barker  
Liam ross  
David Lee  
Stephen Gooch Social  
Mary Pavicich  
Peter Elfar

## BASIC RULES FOR AIRSIDE ACCESS

- You must hold and display a valid ASIC
- You must have a valid reason to be airside (this is fairly stringent under security regulations).
- You may escort passengers without ASIC directly to/from your aircraft ONLY.
- Your ASIC is not approval to be airside or let anyone access airside. It is ID ONLY.
- An ASIC holder must challenge any person who does not display an ASIC or appears to be unauthorised.

## LOCAL AIRPORT NEWS

Port Macquarie Airport terminal was forced to close on 16 April without any RPT flights. On 15 May, Qantas resumed a twice-weekly service to Sydney, via Coffs Harbour, and we have been steadily improving since.

We are grateful to see signs of life returning to the Airport and now offer 23 services per week to Sydney, Brisbane, Canberra and Lord Howe Island, catering for over 1000 passengers a week.

Aircraft operators would be delighted to know that the Airport received \$3.5 million to support the development of a Stage 1 Code A parallel taxiway.



# PARALLEL TAXIWAY PROJECT

On 2 July 2020, the Federal Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications awarded Council \$3,538,260 under the Regional Airports Program to construct a Stage 1 parallel taxiway and conduct essential pavement renewal works at Port Macquarie Airport.

The project aims to enhance the safety and operational efficiency of Port Macquarie Airport through the construction of a 1200m code A parallel taxiway to reduce runway occupancy times for Code A general aviation aircraft and associated airspace congestion.

The parallel taxiway is identified as a development priority in the Port Macquarie Airport Master Plan 2010 and companion Master Plan Addendum Report published in 2013.

This project represents Stage 1 of a future full-length Code C parallel taxiway. The staged approach achieves desired safety outcomes and improves operational efficiency for current aircraft movements.

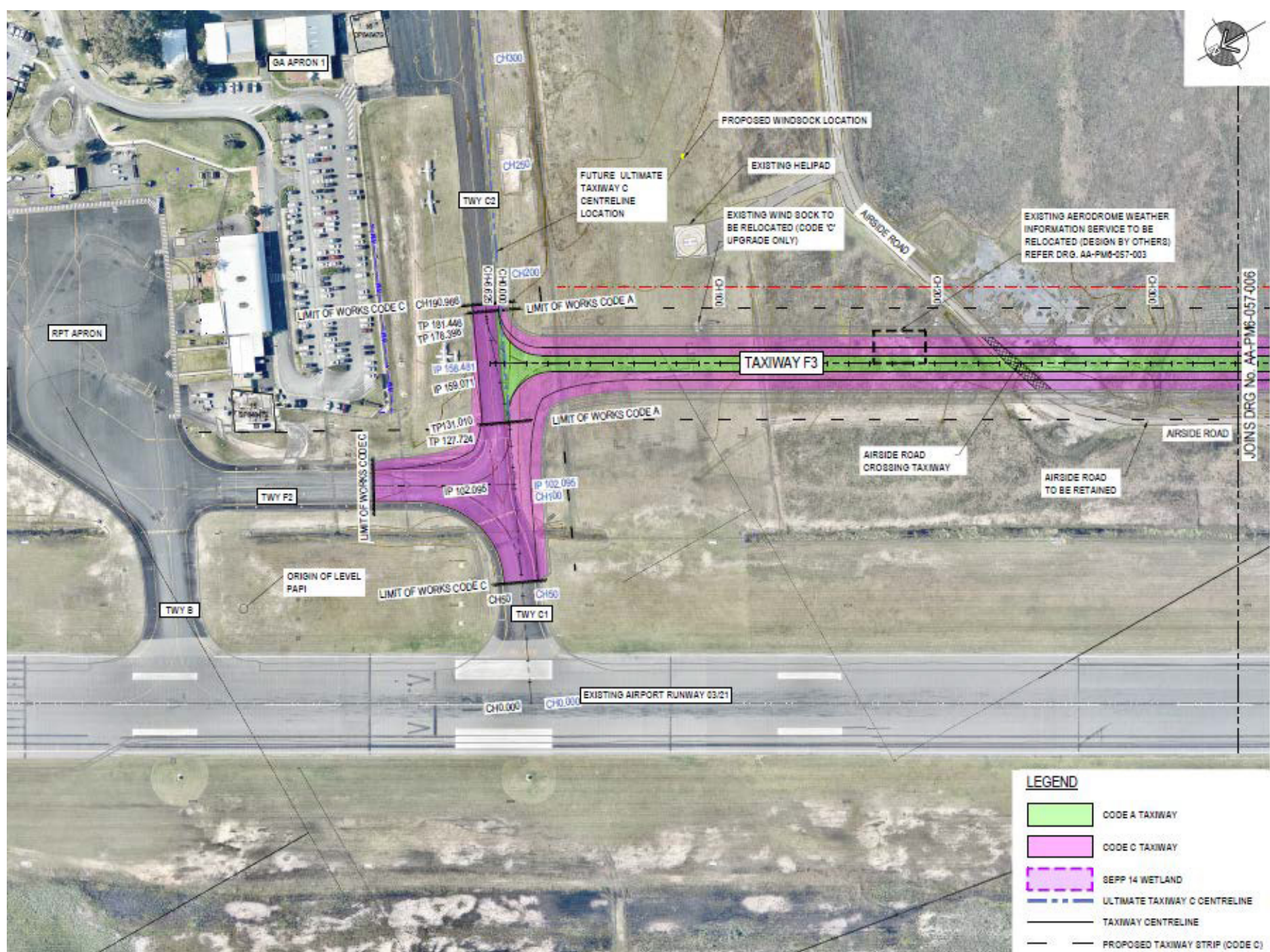
The project also includes essential renewal works to resurface existing general aviation taxiways and aprons to enhance access and facilitate the delivery of essential goods and services including aeromedical and other emergency services. Pavement renewal and resurfacing will include existing taxiways F2, C1, C2 and C3, as well as aprons GA1 and GA2.

The first stage of this project, the decommissioning and relocation of the Bureau of Meteorology Aerodrome Weather Information Service (AWIS) has already commenced, with the majority of services relocated in

October 2020.

The detailed design is underway and a DA, with Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), is expected to be lodged in early 2021. Construction of the taxiway and pavement renewal works are not expected to commence until 2022.

Source: Port Macquarie Airport Newsletter Winter 2020



Parallel taxiway concept design showing intersection with existing taxiways  
Image Source: Port Macquarie Airport Newsletter Winter 2020



# AIRCRAFT FOR HIRE FLIGHTS



Sling - \$150/hour (\$180/hour for non-members)



Cessna 182 VH-DUZ - \$250/hour (contact David Mitchell)



## MEMBERSHIPS

JOIN THE CLUB - If you wish to join us as a member of the Hastings District Flying Club, please download our Membership Kit here:  
<http://goo.gl/jlK4C7>

Flying membership - \$100  
 Social membership - \$40  
 Junior membership - \$11

## PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

Members who direct deposit account payments are reminded to reference their deposit with their name. This includes deposits made at Regional Australia Bank branches.

The bank details are:  
**Regional Australia Bank, Hastings District Flying Club,**  
**BSB: 932 000**  
**Acct No: 500021367**

You can also pay your account with EFTPOS or a Visa or MasterCard, but you will need to come to the club. We are unable to take such payments over the phone.

## MERCHANDISE

Visit our online store - <https://www.hdfc.com.au/online-store>  
 Shirt - \$35  
 Broad brim hat - \$25  
 Cap - \$20  
 Cloth badge - \$4  
 Come Fly With Me Book - \$5  
 Fly Boy Book by Geoff Litchfield - \$20

## FLIGHTS

Discovery Flight - \$150 - purchase online <https://www.hdfc.com.au/online-store/Voucher-Trial-Introductory-Flight-p44667992> or call us  
 Hangar rental - \$190 per month

## FOLLOW US



<https://www.facebook.com/HDFCPMQ>  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/HDFCgroup/>



<https://www.instagram.com/hdfcpmq>



<https://www.hdfc.com.au/news>





## AIRCRAFT WASHING

It is the individual pilot's responsibility to care for our valuable aircraft. This not only involves washing and keeping them clean and tidy but also in general movement of any aircraft within the hangar. Treat our aircraft as your very own because as a member you have part ownership of these aircraft. Please take care of them and help us keep our costs down by looking after them.

### WHY AN AIRCRAFT WASHING ROSTER?

Our aircraft are our purpose. It is vital we care for these valuable assets. The benefits of regular washing and cleaning are numerous.

A roster is the best way to ensure this regularity.

### WHY ME?

This email is being sent to all regular Sling pilots. The HDfC committee believes it is the responsibility of all pilots who fly club aircraft to ensure they are maintained in a clean and tidy manner.

Sharing the load benefits all and keeps costs down.

### HOW DOES IT WORK?

Two people are scheduled on a

fortnightly basis. Washing can occur at any time during this period. The first person listed should contact the other to arrange a suitable time. Book the aircraft on the calendar.

If you cannot perform your duty in the allocated time period you may arrange a swap with another team. Any changes should be clearly shown on the noticeboard roster.

### THE DUTY.

Both Slings are to be washed. This can occur simultaneously or one after the other. Division of labour is your choice.

A box of cleaning materials including instructions is in the hangar. Please read instructions especially with regard to Perspex.

When finished please date and sign the duty roster also found in the box of cleaning materials.

### QUESTIONS?

Please contact me if you have any questions or problems concerning this roster. I will act as the coordinator.

Thank you for your assistance in sharing the load.

**Rod Davison**



## AIRCRAFT WASHING ROSTER 2021

FORTNIGHT BEGINNING	TEAM	PHONE
1/2 TO 15/2	MARY PAVICICH	0419693617
	ROD DAVISON	0419632477
15/2 TO 29/2	ROD DAVISON	0419632477
	CHESTER BIRD	0413084868
29/2 TO 14/3	CHARLES HOPLEY	0488680777
	JONATHON HOPLEY	0488680772
14/3 TO 28/3	JAZZ GOOCH	0497539565
	DIOR TOPPAZZINI	0410184606
28/3 TO 11/4	JACOB DOWD	0409927763
	BODHI HINCHCLIFFE	0434030017
11/4 TO 25/4	HARRY FREUDENSTEIN	0481294284
	RILEY LANGDON	0400153241
25/4 TO 9/5	JAYDEN BARKER	0478607211
	LIAM ROSS	0421835880
9/5 TO 23/5	STEVE SCHWARTZ	0423909869
	STEPHAN TESSEDE	0422462452
23/5 TO 6/6	CONNOR WARNEKEN	65863987
	JABYN BEDDOE	0478087533

## HDFC HOSPITALITY ROSTER 2021

Duty is from 5pm to 8pm of a Friday evening. If unavailable arrange a swap.

22nd Jan	Bruce Dunlop	12th March	Steve Smith
29th Jan	Doug Toppazzini	19th March	Doug Toppazzini
5th Feb	Rod Davison	26th March	Ray Lind
12th Feb	Ray Lind	2nd April	David Toulson
19th Feb	Mike Bullock	9th April	Veronica Lind
26th Feb	Rod Davison	16th April	Mike Bullock
5th March	Bruce Dunlop	23rd April	Rod Davison

## BBQ LUNCH ROSTER 2021

Volunteers needed for BBQ lunch during Flying Competition Sundays. For more information, contact Veronica Lind on +61407779828 or email [marketing@hdfc.com.au](mailto:marketing@hdfc.com.au)

21st Feb	15 Aug
21st Mar	19 Sep
16 May	17 Oct
20 Jun	21 Nov
18 Jul	





# MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE & FLYING INSTRUCTORS

President	Rod Davison   T: 0419 632 477   E: president@hdfc.com.au
Vice President/Club Captain/Chief Flying Instructor	Ray Lind   T: 0428 820 698   E: lindflight@gmail.com
Senior Flying Instructor/Aircraft Maintenance Co-ordinator	Steve Smith   T: 0405 775 192   E: cfi@hdfc.com.au
Secretary	Bruce Dunlop   T: 0414 594 223   E: secretary@hdfc.com.au
Treasurer	David Toulson   T: 0418 668 355   E: treasurer@hdfc.com.au
Editor, Marketing and Communications	Veronica Lind   T: 0407 779 828   E: marketing@hdfc.com.au
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Events Manager/RAAus Senior Flying Instructor	Mike Bullock   T: 0412 237 787   E: mrbullock@iinet.net.au
RAAus Senior Flying Instructor	Bob Needham   T: 0481 327 931   E: induna191@gmail.com
RAAus & GA Senior Flying Instructor	David Massey   T: 0403.925.462   E: david@massey.nu
RAAus Flying Instructor	Rod Hall   T: 0418 229 232   E: rod@jetfighter.com.au

## HASTINGS DISTRICT FLYING CLUB

P.O. Box 115, Port Macquarie, NSW 2444  
T: (02) 6583 1695 | E: president@hdfc.com.au

[www.hdfc.com.au](http://www.hdfc.com.au)



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NSW 2444



## HASTINGS DISTRICT FLYING CLUB

is where Aviators, their families and friends come together  
to share their flying dreams since 1958

Since 1958, the Hastings District Flying Club (HDFC) Port Macquarie  
brings aviators, their family and friends together  
to share their flying dreams.

HDFC encourages air-mindedness and interest in aviation  
in the youth of the Hastings district.  
It operates a flying club and recreational  
aviation flying school with a hangar and club house at  
Port Macquarie Airport on the NSW Mid North Coast.  
Friday night is Club Night from 5pm,  
with a sausage sizzle every 1st Friday visitors welcome.

Club membership is \$100 (flying) and \$40 (social).  
The club owns a Sling which is available for hire by HDFC Members  
for \$150/hr (including GST).

A monthly flying competition and BBQ lunch is held at the  
Port Macquarie Airport on the 3rd Sunday of each month.

## HASTINGS DISTRICT FLYING CLUB

P.O. Box 115, Port Macquarie, NSW 2444  
T: (02) 6583 1695 | E: [president@hdfc.com.au](mailto:president@hdfc.com.au)  
[www.hdfc.com.au](http://www.hdfc.com.au)

