

**Newsletter No. 350****April 2025***NQAC Spot Landing Comp**Atherton Sunday May 11th*

The Atherton Aero Club is an organization of aviation enthusiasts who promote the sport of aircraft building and flying.

The organization is associated with *Recreation Aviation Australia Inc.* The Club meets at Atherton Airport every third Sunday of the month. Food and drinks are available and visitors are most welcome.



Jon's Tri Pacer is up for sale - See Page 9 inside



Atherton Aero Club - Committee Contacts

President	Vice-President	Secretary	Treasurer
Jack Cross PO Box 227 ATHERTON Q 4883 xjac@bigpond.net.au	Dave Camp PO Box 227 ATHERTON Q 4883 dcamp.gvale@gmail.com	Mark Aitken PO Box 227 ATHERTON Q 4883 mjaitken54@bigpond.com	TBA PO Box 227 ATHERTON Q 4883

Web Page <http://www.athertonaeroclub.org/>

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/AthertonAeroClub?ref=hl>

Email athertonaeroclub@gmail.com

EDITOR'S NOTE - by Bill Gronbeck

Hi All and welcome to edition No 351. In this issue, the first in a series of Aviation Book Reviews by our club members, activities at the FNQ Air Museum and some other old stuff. STILL WAITING FOR AN OUTBREAK OF GOOD FLYING WEATHER! Keep those flying adventures going and remember to send us your photos and stories.



A thank you to Kev Priestly, Jon Collins, the NQAC, FNQAM and other Clubs and Flying Groups who contributed content to this edition. Please contact me with your newsletter contributions on any of the following: (07) 4036 2868 or 0408 073 142 or email at -

williamgronbeck2@gmail.com

Watch the AAC, NQAC, Burdekin Flyers, FNQ Flyers, Donnington and Innisfail Facebook Pages for details of calendar changes and other short notice events. Check out the AAC Website for the YATN weather-cam and older AAC Newsletters.



The next **AAC Club Function** will be our regular monthly social get-together and BBQ Lunch on **Sunday the 18th of May 2025.**

From **10:30am** to around midday at the **AAC Atherton Aerodrome** facility.

Visitors are most welcome.



WHEN IN DOUBT HEAD FOR THE BLUE

(A VFR Flight from Cairns to Longreach and return).

By William (Bill) Gronbeck.

(Originally published in Air Facts Journal)

Late in March 2020, just before the Covid 19 travel restrictions started to bite (in Australia anyway), I received a call from pilot friend Hew asking if I was available to help him pick up his RV7 from Longreach. He had left it there some weeks earlier following a brake fire that damaged a wheel spat and gear leg fairing.

The brake problem was now rectified and the aircraft awaited collection from Longreach. Straight line distance Cairns (YBCS) to Longreach (YLRE) is around 830Km (450nm or 515sm) but much further by road so the only option for getting there and back in the one day was by air. Hew had borrowed a hangar mate's RV6A to fly to Longreach and retrieve his aircraft. All that he needed now was another pilot to accompany him in the RV6 then fly that aircraft back home to Cairns. Was I available? – You bet!

I had flown that particular RV6A before but thought it better for Hew to fly the aircraft to Longreach while I watched him operate the new Garmin unit that had replaced the Dynon I was familiar with. That would give me a chance to update myself on the Garmin before the solo flight home.

Weather along the coast near our Cairns departure point was mostly VFR with occasional rain showers and low cloud along the coastal ranges being produced by a strong on shore wind. The forecast for later in the day indicated deteriorating conditions extending further inland and could make crossing VFR back over the coastal range difficult. No such problem for Hew as both he and the RV7 were IFR capable. I would have to return VFR which was no real problem due to the plentiful inland alternates available and my retired status.

The visual departure from Cairns and out through the gap at Stoney Creek (SCRK) was uneventful with conditions rapidly improving as we headed inland with blue sky for the remainder of the flight. Once across the range we were in uncontrolled G airspace requiring a few CTAF overfly broadcasts and apart from monitoring area frequencies, no interaction with ATC. Longreach itself is an uncontrolled aerodrome.



RV7 and RV6A at Longreach



QANTAS Longreach Museum in background

After refuelling our aircraft and giving Hew's RV7 a thorough pre-flight, we taxied in company for departure Longreach. Departure time was a little later in the day than we had anticipated, but there was still ample daylight for the trip home to Cairns and for any weather diversions that might be needed. Mareeba on the western side of the coastal ranges would be my main alternate with Chillagoe (YCGO) well out to the west if the weather really went bad.

Continued/

WHEN IN DOUBT HEAD FOR THE BLUE - Continued.

Inland temperatures in North Queensland at that time of the year can be quite high producing plenty of thermal activity and the formation of thunderstorms in the more humid air, especially closer to the coast. Hew climbed the RV7 to 8000ft on an IFR plan, I followed in the RV6 at the VFR level of 7500ft with a true airspeed of around 150+ knots.

We parted ways at Hughenden (YHUG) where Hew tracked direct to Cairns while I continued on via Mount Garnet (YMRT) and Mareeba (YMBA). A few minutes after passing Hughenden a descent to 5500ft was necessary to remain under a lowering cloud base that had started to form. Soon enough, approaching the Mount Garnet area, rain and patches of low cloud forced further descent to 3500ft and lower with some diversions either side of track to remain in VMC. Clearer conditions were visible out to the west and would provide an easy escape route in that direction should the need arise.



RV6A and lowering cloud south of Mt Garnet



RV6A looking through Stoney Creek gap

This is where it gets a bit tricky. When flying in light rain it is possible to see a long way ahead but lack of visual clarity through a rain spattered windscreen can result in a pilot unintentionally getting very close to the top of hills and ridges without noticing, especially where the terrain ahead is gradually increasing in height. With that in mind I did not descend any lower than necessary while I orbited about 20nm short of Mareeba looking for a way through.

Sadly the year before, a quite experienced C182 pilot died in a CFIT accident in similar conditions in the same area. His aircraft hit the top of a ridge just 14Km short of his Atherton (YATN) destination. Low cloud and heavy showers were moving through the area at the time.

Between Mount Garnet and Mareeba the terrain begins a gradual slope up to around 4300ft just to the east of track. Today the high ground was completely covered by low cloud with just a few narrow shafts of sunlight breaking through (sucker holes!). The GPS map proved to be invaluable in that situation, keeping me orientated and away from the high ground.

I eventually diverted about 20nm to the west to get around the low cloud and rain blocking the way. From there the path to Mareeba, Stoney Creek and Cairns was, much to my surprise, wide open. ATC had advised me earlier when I came into VHF comms range that Stoney Creek weather was marginal for VFR so for once my luck was in. A short hold at Stoney Creek while waiting for a clearance then the last few miles into Cairns. Hew had landed only a few minutes before me. We hangared the RVs, compared notes and called it a day.

I had thoroughly enjoyed the unexpected flight and the opportunity to practice my weather avoidance skills. Thanks again Hew. It was unfortunate that there wasn't time for a brief visit to the QANTAS Founders Museum at Longreach but that will keep as an excuse for another flight.





RV6A VH-IWM. A great little performer. Climbed like a rocket with a cruise TAS in excess of 150 knots. Unfortunately no longer based in the far north.



Book Review "Fate is the Hunter" by Ernest K. Gann

Ernest K. Gann's aviation classic "Fate is the Hunter" offers far more than entertainment for pilots of light aircraft. This memoir, drawn from Gann's extensive flying career spanning the 1930s through the 1950s, delivers profound insights into airmanship that remain relevant today.

Gann's vivid accounts of flying DC-2s, DC-3s and C-87s during the formative years of commercial aviation highlight the unforgiving nature of flight. While today's aircraft boast sophisticated systems and redundancies, the fundamental relationship between pilot and aircraft remains unchanged. Gann's experiences remind us that regardless of technological advances - sound judgment and humility before the elements are timeless qualities of good piloting.



Perhaps the most valuable aspect of the book is Gann's unflinching examination of decision-making under pressure. He recounts numerous scenarios where small oversights or momentary complacency led to near-disaster. These narrative case studies serve as powerful reminders that in aviation, the margin between routine and catastrophe can be razor-thin.

His descriptions of navigating through fog, thunderstorms, and icing conditions without modern forecasting tools underscore the importance of conservative decision-making and maintaining healthy margins of safety.

The book's title itself offers a philosophical framework for approaching flight. Gann suggests that while preparation, skill, and knowledge are essential, pilots must also acknowledge the role of chance. This perspective fosters vigilance and encourages continual learning rather than complacency born of routine.

Beyond the technical aspects, "Fate is the Hunter" captures the profound joy and privilege of flight. Gann's lyrical descriptions of dawn departures and the serene beauty observed from altitude remind us why we choose to fly despite the inherent risks.

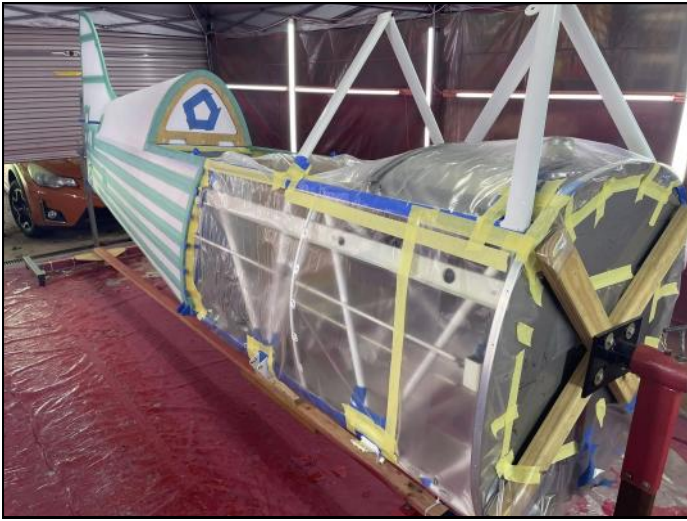
In conclusion, "Fate is the Hunter" deserves a place on every pilot's bookshelf not as a historical curiosity, but as a timeless manual on airmanship, decision-making, and respect for the craft of flying. Though written decades ago, its lessons remain as relevant in the skies above us today as they were when Gann first penned them.

Review by Kevin Priestly

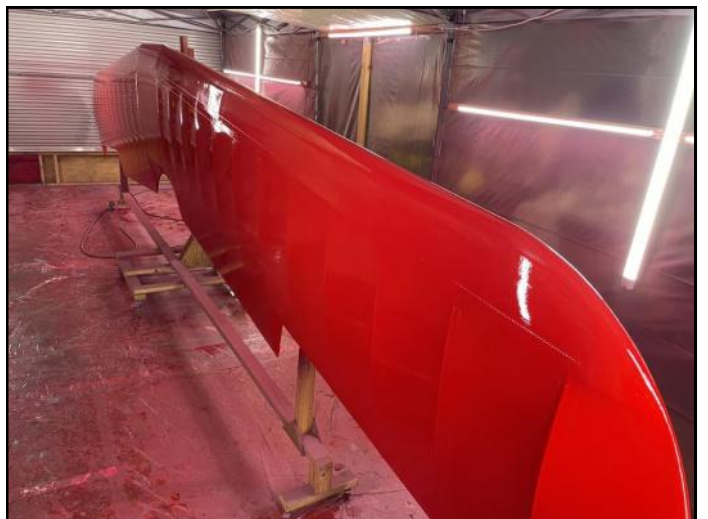
(ED — eBook available for \$12.99 from Amazon Kindle)

JON COLLINS' SKYBOLT BUILD 1

30th March. Well, that's a wrap! Final bit of fabric covered! The top wing got its final coat of red today. When it is sufficiently dry, it will be taken to the hangar. Next job....install undercarriage, instruments and engine installation. Still planning on flying it before year end!



Fuselage before and after painting



Top wing before and after painting



Lower Wing Half



Spats, struts and panels

JON COLLINS' SKYBOLT BUILD 2

5th May. Further progress over the last month including the gradual move from home to the hangar at Atherton.



Main undercarriage fitted



Tailwheel fitted



On the trailer to Atherton hangar



Fuselage at Atherton



Instrument panel fit out

AIRCRAFT FOR SALE

1957 PA22 4-Seat Tri Pacer

\$73,500

Engine Lycoming O320 150HP

TTAF 2522

ETR 885

PTR 1480

Interior 7/10

Exterior 7/10

Avionics

TRIG TT31 Mode S Transponder

Dynon D3 EFIS

TKM MX11 Comm

Garmin Aera 660

Other

Custom cockpit cover

Auxiliary 30L Tank

STOL wingtips

Wheel pants available

Delivery by negotiation

Excellent, well maintained, economical touring aircraft. Recent annual. Genuine reason for sale – about to complete a homebuilt.

CONTACT:

Jon Collins

0438 634 411

jc4487@gmail.com



A Survey Helicopter will be based at Atherton Aerodrome during May. The survey area is located approx. 20nm to the west. The aerial ring system may initially be set up at, and lifted from, Atherton before being stored at a remote site closer to the survey area.





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2025 North Queensland Aero Club Events

Flying Competition – Spot Landing YATN <i>Fly one of the NQAC Cessnas or bring your own aircraft and see how closely you can land to the runway marking at Atherton</i>	Sunday May 3rd Flying from 0830 Re-scheduled 11th May
Electronic Flight Bag (OzRunways) Safety Seminar Presented by Jack Doyle at the Club Hangar <i>Learn how to safely incorporate EFB usage into your everyday flying operations.</i>	Sunday May 4 th Starting at 1400
Old Station Fly In <i>Our big fly away for the year. Come on a weekend away at the Old Station Fly In and Air Show near Rockhampton. Get ready for a weekend of high flying excitement, stunning aerobatics, and family fun at this years Old Station Air Show, held on the 23rd to the 25th of May in the heart of Queensland's beautiful Raglan region.</i>	23 rd to the 25 th May *Club aircraft available for hire and to cost share between pilots*
Cairns Tower Visit <i>Come on a fascinating tour of the Cairns ATC tower with one of the controllers. Limited places available so please register your interest with us!</i>	Date TBA
Pinnarendi Fly In Lunch <i>Take part in a fun short fly away to Pinnarendi Station for a delicious lunch at the Brick Oven Cafe</i>	Saturday June 21 st Departing at 1000
Flying Competition – Instrumentless Circuit YMBA <i>How accurately can you fly a circuit...without flight instruments?</i>	Sunday July 20 th Flying from 0830
Flying Competition – Air Race! <i>The NQAC Ray Fry Air Race. Actually it's not a race. Rather it's a time trial. The fastest aircraft is not the one that wins rather the most accurate based on nominated ETI.</i>	Saturday September 13 th Flying from 0830
Wings Night	Saturday November 8 th
Annual General Meeting	Saturday November 15 th



Extracts from FNQAM APRIL UPDATE

Hi All, Thank You for Your Support.

We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who renewed their membership with us recently. A special thanks also goes to those who have gone above and beyond by making a donation. We are equally grateful to those who contribute throughout the year, whether through financial support, the giving of time, or the donation of materials. Your generosity and dedication form the foundation of everything we achieve. We'll be emailing a members guide shortly.

Our volunteers are making a great progress with Hangar 2 and also in welcoming visitors, mentoring our younger volunteers, and managing the day-to-day operations that keep the museum running smoothly. Their commitment, skills, and enthusiasm continue to inspire all of us.

In this update you'll find the latest updates on Hangar 2, and a few other newsworthy events from around the museum. The Quonset Igloo relocation project stage 1 has been completed and when we receive approval we'll send this through. Exciting developments are on the horizon — we'll share more as soon as they're confirmed!



*Hangar 2 – Steady Progress
Despite the Weather!*

FNQAM APRIL UPDATE—Continued

Hangar 2 is coming along steadily, with work taking place on average three mornings a week. This has been a winning formula, especially with the regular afternoon lightning storms putting a stop to any works!

With the exception of the crane hire, all the work so far has been completed in-house under the guidance of our builder — saving the Museum tens of thousands of dollars. A massive thank you to our volunteers, who have done an outstanding job tackling every challenge thrown their way.

The structure itself is largely complete, with only about 9 days of work before roof and wall cladding can take place in May. Once that's done, the next stage of the internal fit out can get underway!

A group of our younger volunteers have been a huge help too, pitching in with time-consuming tasks. It's fantastic to see them gaining new skills and experience while helping us move things along faster.

Our new (well, new to us!) 1980s-era forklift has been absolutely invaluable for working safely at heights. It's been worked very hard, and although it occasionally gives us the odd technical hiccup, it's been a real asset to the project. Thanks to neighbours Mission Aviation Fellowship for helping us out recently!

A huge thank you again to everyone involved — your hard work is what's bringing this project to life!



FNQAM APRIL UPDATE—Continued

A Big Step Forward thanks to Bendigo Bank!



A huge thank you to Stephen Gear, Branch Manager of Bendigo Bank (Mareeba & Dimbulah), for visiting and presenting FNQ Aviation Museum with a huge cheque to fund the completed disabled accessible footpaths and entry steps for Hangar 2!

Your support helps us improve accessibility and tell our local aviation stories to the community in our upcoming display hangar. Pictured (L-R): Ian Whyte (Research/Curator), Steve Charles (Director/Restoration Manager), Stephen Gear (Bendigo Branch Manager), Joan Stanton (Research), and Jenny McCabe (Director/Secretary).

We truly appreciate Bendigo Bank's commitment to local projects—this is a fantastic boost for visitors and the museum!





Pinnarendi Station Stay & Café

<https://www.facebook.com/Pinnarendi/>

Ron Atkinson 0419 201 622



SAVE THE DATE

The Old Station
Fly-In & Heritage Show

SAVE THE DATE

23 - 25 May 2025

Show planning is underway, 2025 will be bigger and better than ever!

- Exciting air show
- Earlier camping entry
- Improved gate entry
- More entertainment
- More food vans

"Australia's Favourite Country Air Show"

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"Australia's Favourite Country Air Show"

AAC EVENTS CALENDAR

(Check Your Club Website or Facebook Page For Short Notice Changes)

Atherton Aero Club 2025 Events

May Sunday 18th—**AAC Meeting & BBQ Lunch** 1030 at Atherton YATN

Other 2025 Events

May Sunday 11th—**NQAC Spot Landing Competition** from 0830 YATN

May Sunday 18th—**Woodstock Wings & Wheels** 0800–1200 YDOP

May Friday 23rd to Sunday 25th—**The Old Station Fly-In**

Jun Sat/Sun 21st/22nd—**Woodstock Wings & Wheels** (including Great Northern **Jabiru Flock-In** 0800–1200 YDOP

**YOUR CLUB'S EVENTS
CALENDAR HERE**





Woodstock Wings & Wheels

**Sunday
18th May**

8am - 12 noon

**Free entry for
pilots & public**



Hot food, coffee and ice-cream vans

Market stalls — wide variety of wares

No landing fees on event days

Ample parking for aircraft and vehicles

All types of aircraft and display vehicles welcome!

Under-wing and public camping available

Facebook — “Woodstock Wings & Wheels at Donnington Airpark”

Contact: Christian Smith

0418 636727

3467 Flinders Highway,

Woodstock, QLD

ERSA Code: YDOP

**RWY 11/29,
930 metres grass.**

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QUEENSLAND SECTION

Places of Interest and Activities in NQ



North Queensland Soaring Centre

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Or message us on Facebook

The background image shows a vast, flat landscape under a clear blue sky. A glider is visible in the upper right corner, and another glider's wing is partially visible on the right edge.



hot air
BALLOON

www.hotair.com.au/cairns

The background image shows two hot air balloons, one orange and yellow, and another orange and yellow, floating over a misty, hilly landscape with scattered trees.



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The background image is split into two panels. The left panel shows a large, modern building with a glass facade, likely the museum. The right panel shows a line of vintage biplanes parked on a tarmac.

Northern Flyers

Donnington Airpark (YDOP)



Burdekin Flyers (YAYR)



Atherton Aero Club (YATN)



NOTICE



The **Atherton Aero Club** is now an ASIC Issuing Agent for **Aviation ID Australia**.

Those seeking the issue or renewal of an Aviation Security Identification Card (ASIC) should apply directly to **Aviation ID Australia** via the following link:

<https://aviationidaustralia.net.au/application.html>

Once the ASIC card has been approved the applicant will be advised and the required “face-to-face” identity check carried out locally by an Atherton Aero Club representative. On the satisfactory completion of the identity check the local agent will hand over the ASIC card to the applicant.

AIRCRAFT FOR SALE AND WANTED

If you have, or know of, an aircraft for sale please contact me directly by telephone or email with full details. The AAC offers free advertising in the club newsletter as a service to local flyers. Direct emailing of your advert to aviators on the club mailing list is available should your advert be received after the publication cut-off date. *Bill Gronbeck, EDITOR.*



INTERESTED IN BUILDING YOUR OWN AIRCRAFT?

The Sport Aircraft Association of Australia (SAAA) is an organization that has mentored and assisted many owner builders, for both VH and Ultralight registered aircraft.

Further information on the SAAA's National and FNQ Chapter 34 websites:

<http://www.saaa.com/>

<http://www.saaafnq.com/>

Local contact is:

Laurie Wincen (Secretary) laurieq19@gmail.com

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Lilley Grose & Long - Solicitors

Atherton, Queensland.

Practicing in the following areas of law: Commercial, Criminal, Family Law, Property & Conveyancing, Wills & Estates

Contact details

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34 Main Street
Atherton, QLD4883
Phone: 07 4091 2655

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Atherton Aero Club - Membership Application / Renewal

☐

New Member

☐

Returning Member



PERSONAL DETAILS

Full name					Date of Birth		
Street address					State		Postcode
Postal address					State		Postcode
Email address					Occupation		
Telephone	ah		bh		mobile		

MEMBERSHIP

<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 60.00	Single Member	Single member with voting rights
<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 100.00	Family Member	Two members with voting rights
<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 50.00	Associate Member	Single member with NO voting rights
<input type="checkbox"/> no charge	Student Member	Single member with NO voting rights

PAYMENT

Forms to be sent to: *The Treasurer
Atherton Aero Club
PO Box 227
ATHERTON QLD 4883*

or email to: *xjac@bigpond.net.au*

Payments can be made by: *EFT, Cheque, cash, or at the Bendigo Bank*

EFT Details: *Atherton Aero Club BSB 633000 ACC 114331796 (Ref - Your Name)*

I hereby apply for membership to the Atherton Aero Club and agree to abide by the Constitution and any rules and regulations thereof. I further agree that my contact details may be made available to other members of the association as the Management Committee deems necessary.

Signed _____ Dated _____

Print name: _____ Print name: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY

Membership type		Receipt No		Fee Paid	\$
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