

Issue 586 July 2024

Victorian Association of Radio Model Soaring



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1405 Stud Road, ROWVILLE 3178



# Aspectivity

*Deadline for the next Aspectivity is Friday 2 August or earlier please, one week prior to the general meeting held on the second Friday of the month, i.e. Friday 9 August at 7:30pm in the club rooms. N.B. The August General Meeting will follow on from the AGM.*

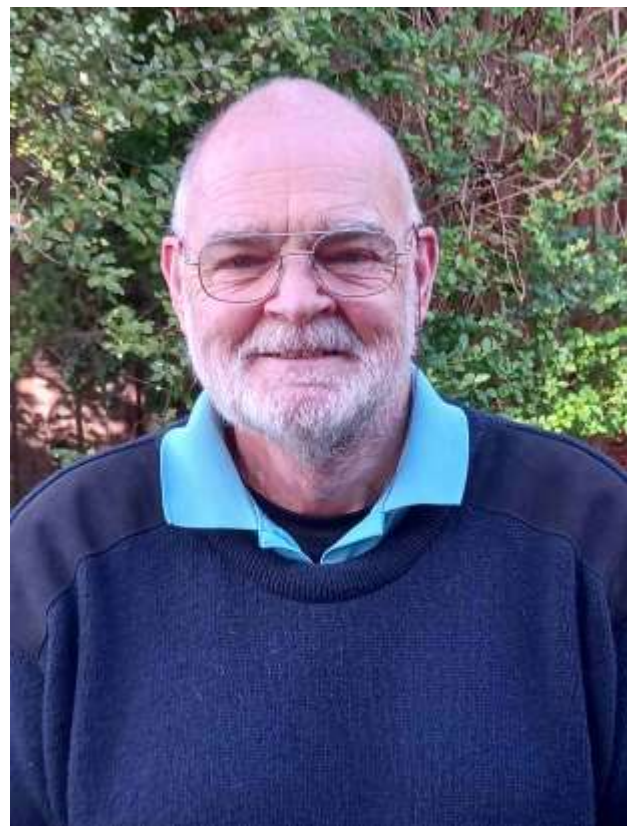
## President's Annual Report 2023/24

by Ken Madill

Looking back through previous copies of Aspectivity, we have been at our Stud Rd site for almost eighteen months. A lot of positive things have happened in that time. We owe past President Ron Hickman a huge thanks for the fantastic effort he put in to get us to where we are today. He managed to keep many balls in the air at once and ensure we ended up with excellent facilities and all permissions in place to allow us to take full advantage of them.

This whole exercise has been a collaborative effort with Knox City Council. After my involvement with them over the last twelve months I have nothing but the highest praise for all Knox staff who I have dealt with; they have been extremely helpful and supportive of VARMS.

Council have put drains under the road entrance which has overcome the problem of water over the drive and the subsequent damage to the road surface. Additional drainage works are being carried out which are proving successful in preventing excess water from accumulating around the car park and pits area. A pipe has also been added so helicopter flyers will no longer require gumboots to get to the helipad. Council have also helped us finalise several other items such as obtaining approval for night time entry, fixing the leaks under the roller doors and sorting out problems with the septic tank pump.



It was decided that our ride-on mower was too small and the tractor too big for the new runway, so both were sold off and a new 'goldilocks' (just right) zero-turn mower was purchased with the proceeds. This is working well and takes minimal time to cut the runway and pits area. The dedication of our mowing team, both human and animal, has ensured a magnificent runway week after week, even during the drought times.

We have put artificial grass under the covered area of the pits. A submission was made for funding under our men's shed affiliation but unfortunately was not successful. We went ahead, however, and completed the work using club funds. This has worked out well and has overcome the tripping hazard that existed with the old covering.

Several members have made significant contributions to VARMS over the last twelve months and I thank them all. It is not until you get involved with the day to day running of a club that you realise how many people are actively contributing to its smooth running.

Evan Green took over the role of Webmaster and, when the Registrar resigned, he offered to take on that role as well on a temporary basis to help us streamline and document the membership processes. This has resulted in Evan setting up an automated renewal process for club membership which is working extremely well. The system has received much positive feedback, and we are all benefiting from Evan's fantastic efforts. We have also purchased our own membership card printer. This printer will pay for itself in a few years and will overcome the problems we had with quality and getting new cards printed throughout the year.

After our relocation we have managed to get back to some serious flying. Monthly aerotows remain popular. The new site has provided some excellent thermals with some very long flights being achieved. We are looking at holding an annual inter club event, possibly in May. In the last year we held two fun fly events that were well attended and are planning to make this a three-monthly event.

Sunday morning glider training is ongoing. We have a group of dedicated instructors who, with the use of club models, provide training assistance that is appreciated by all trainees.

We have had several glider related activities with eRES, F5J and thermal challenge competitions. We have also hosted events for the Radio Control Glider Association throughout the year.

Wednesday FFF (Fly, Fix and Feed) remains popular, with lots of flying including electric aerotow, electric ½A Texaco. New models are being created and the problems of the world are being solved over a few glasses of red.



Anthony Peate has demonstrated his electrical wizardry by installing two 12V charging systems in the pits area. He has also managed to set up a very clever system that ensures the air-conditioning system shuts down after two hours of inactivity on the controller, preventing the problem we have had of it being left on and causing the generator to run overnight using up our LPG supply. See his description on pages 10 and 11.

The laser cutter has been fitted with a permanent extraction system. The laser team are to be congratulated on developing and setting up an excellent system where people are trained in use of the laser cutter. It is getting a lot of use and drawing more people into building balsa models, especially the ½A category. Andrew Allen's Christmas decorations were a huge hit with children of all ages at our end of year get together. Our workshop is taking shape. A dust extraction system and new power points have been added. We are well on the way to having the facilities needed to allow modellers to undertake any required building tasks at the clubhouse.

During the year we arranged for our State Instructor Les Marriner to run an instructor's course. Four additional instructors are now qualified to assess and approve members for their various wings qualifications. Les does a fantastic job and his assistance was greatly appreciated.

One of our concerns was the possibility of noise from our models upsetting our neighbours. The only feedback I have had was from a neighbour who was watching us on an aerotow from his balcony and came down for a closer look. He said noise was not a problem and he thought what we were doing was fantastic.

We are now the largest model aircraft club in Victoria with a membership of over 200. We have a healthy bank balance but need to decide where we want to go in the next few years and what improvements we want to make. We have also had fifteen miniature scale modellers join the club. They do not fly radio control but

build static models and use our clubhouse for regular get togethers. We are happy to share our facilities with other modellers. There is a steady stream of new members applying to join. Many of these are from other clubs who are commenting that they like the facilities and the atmosphere at VARMS. I believe it is important that we have a strong presence and can demonstrate that the facilities are being actively used. As our members tend to get older, having new members coming in and being able to show that many people benefit from the club is vital to ensuring our long-term security.

We are a “Band of Brothers” who are lucky enough to have a hobby/sport that keeps our souls young, fingers agile and dreams in the sky.

Happy flying!

**Ken Madill**  
**President**



## June General Meeting minutes



|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <b>Date:</b>      | 14 June 2024   |
| <b>Time:</b>      | 7:30pm   |
| <b>Venue:</b>     | VARMS Clubroom, Rowville   |
| <b>Apologies:</b> | Colin Kahn, Graham Sullivan, Ken Madill, Nigel Murray, Bruce Clapperton, Tim Morland |
| <b>Visitors:</b>  | Nil  |

### Meeting

- Opening:** Meeting was opened by the Treasurer at 7:30pm with 10 members present. Two members arrived at 8pm.
- New Members:** Nil.
- Previous minutes:** The previous minutes could not be accepted in the absence of a quorum.  
**Note:** It was acknowledged that there was not a quorum and, as such, no decisions could be made.
- Business arising from the minutes:**
  - 12v power supply fixed.
  - Successful Fun Fly - Enjoyed by all in good weather.
  - Evan Green working very hard on the updates to the web site as well as the membership renewal process. Thanks, Evan, for such great work.
  - Questioned the need for future General Meetings during winter in the absence of significant agenda items, in line with process with Committee meetings.  
*Keep as is until new financial year.*
- Correspondence:** The following items of correspondence were received and sent.
  - Received:**
    - Australian Men’s Shed newsletter.
    - Australian Men’s Shed Nuts and Bolts newsletter.
    - KCC Various emails.
    - MAAA Fee structure FY2025 – Seniors to rise by \$5

- v. VMAA Special Committee updates.
- vi. Consumer Affairs Victoria – Annual statement to be submitted online.
- vii. Other emails – political party and junk.

**b. Sent:**

- i. Various - KCC.

**6. Treasurer's Report:** The treasurer's report was presented.

The Treasurer advised the meeting of the finances. Unable to accept the report in the absence of a quorum.

**7. Reports:** The following reports were presented.

- a. Power.
- b. Glider.
- c. Helicopter.

**8. General Business:** The following items were discussed.

- a. Earth Works - Council working on swamp drainage behind Pilot Box - work proceeding very well.
- b. Overflow parking area - quote from KCC - approximately \$40k. Awaiting detailed sketches to understand how many bays and work that is required. Can we get subsidy from Council?
- c. Membership renewal time coming up:
  - i. Evan Green in process of updating the process to be electronic with online payments and immediate updates to any changes to status. Manual payments can still be done directly into bank account as well as manual registration and membership update.
  - ii. Need to raise club fees raised by Lew?
  - iii. Fee structure will be available on website.
- d. AGM will be pushed back to August meeting 9th August 2024.
- e. Synchronising meeting dates critical as officially club membership runs to May 31 while MAAA insurance runs to June30. Committee meeting should be held late May followed by AGM early June to ratify decisions being recommended by committee.

**9. Next Meeting:** The next General Meeting will be 7:30pm Fri 12 July 2024 at the clubhouse.

**10. Closure:** There being no further business, the Treasurer closed the meeting at 8:05pm.

## F-F-F @ R-R-R

R-R-Regular F-F-F (Feed, Fix, Fly) nights are held at R-R-R (Rowville Recreation Reserve)  
5:00 to about 9:00pm on W-W-Wednesday each w-w-week. Come and j-j-join in the F-F-FUN.

I THREW MY PHONE OFF THE ROOF AND IT BROKE. I GUESS AIRPLANE MODE WASN'T WORKING.

# Annual General Meeting, 9<sup>th</sup> August 2024

The VARMS AGM will be held immediately prior to the General Meeting in the club rooms on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> August commencing at 7:30pm. Nominations for Committee should be submitted on the form below and mailed to: VARMS Inc., P.O. Box 4096 Knox City Centre VIC 3152, or handed to the Secretary, no later than seven days prior to the AGM.

## VARMS Inc. COMMITTEE NOMINATION FORM

(Please print names clearly)

I, \_\_\_\_\_ VARMS/MAAA No. \_\_\_\_\_

hereby nominate: \_\_\_\_\_

for the position of (circle one): President / Vice President / Treasurer / Secretary / \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Seconded by: \_\_\_\_\_

### Candidate's consent

I hereby accept this nomination for the aforementioned position.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_



### FORM OF APPOINTMENT OF PROXY FOR VARMS AGM 2024

I, \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

being a financial member of the Victorian Association of Radio Model Soaring Inc., hereby appoint

\_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_

also being a financial member of VARMS Inc. as my proxy to vote for me, on my behalf, at the Annual General Meeting of Victorian Association of Radio Model Soaring Inc. and any adjournment of that meeting. My proxy is authorised to vote FOR / AGAINST / ABSTAIN (delete as appropriate below) any motion put to the meeting. If not indicated below they may vote as they think best represents my interests.

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| FOR / AGAINST / ABSTAIN | 1. Election of Committee.                           |
| FOR / AGAINST / ABSTAIN | 2. Acceptance of the Balance Sheet for 2023/24.     |
| FOR / AGAINST / ABSTAIN | 3. Motion to confer Life Membership on Ron Hickman. |
| FOR / AGAINST / ABSTAIN | 4. Other (please nominate items).                   |

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ VARMS/MAAA No. \_\_\_\_\_

this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2024.

## WANTED - Articles for Aspectivity

New articles for Aspectivity needed now. Looking for some "Hints & Tips" items if you can do it. Send your images and imaginings to [editor@varms.org.au](mailto:editor@varms.org.au). Thanks to prior contributors.



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0415 412 096

### Club Merchandise

I have VARMS embroidered caps in stock for \$20 each, embroidered VARMS logos \$10. If you would like one, email me at

[lewmar@iprimus.com.au](mailto:lewmar@iprimus.com.au)

see me at the club or call me on  
9887 1060.

**Lew Rodman**



WHO INVENTED THE FIRST AIRPLANE THAT WOULDN'T FLY? THE WRONG BROTHERS.

# Upcoming Events

VARMS General Meetings are held at 7:30pm on the second Friday of the month (except January) in the Rowville clubrooms (8:00pm during Daylight Saving). Committee meetings are held on the Monday two weeks before the General Meeting at the clubrooms. Here is the schedule for 2024.

| C'ttee Mtg | General Mtg | C'ttee Mtg | General Mtg | C'ttee Mtg | General Mtg |
|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| 29 Jan     | 9 Feb       | 26 Feb     | 8 Mar       | 25 Mar     | 12 Apr      |
| 29 Apr     | 10 May      | 27 May     | 14 Jun      | 1 Jul      | 12 Jul      |
| 29 Jul     | 9 Aug - AGM | 2 Sept     | 13 Sept     | 30 Sept    | 11 Oct      |
| 28 Oct     | 8 Nov       | 2 Dec      | 13 Dec      |            |             |

| Date        | Description                           | Location                 | Contact                       | Host                                |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 13 July     | Aerotow                               | Rowville                 | <a href="#">Anthony Peate</a> | <a href="#">VARMS</a>               |
| 10 Aug      | Aerotow                               | Rowville                 | <a href="#">Anthony Peate</a> | <a href="#">VARMS</a>               |
| 14 Sep      | Aerotow                               | Rowville                 | <a href="#">Anthony Peate</a> | <a href="#">VARMS</a>               |
| 21, 22 Sept | 41 <sup>st</sup> Mammoth Scale Fly-in | Karramomus, Shepparton   |                               | <a href="#">Valley Radio Flyers</a> |
| 27-29 Sept  | Aerotow                               | Cootamundra              | To be confirmed               |                                     |
| 12 – 13 Oct | VMAA Festival of Flight               | Goon Nure, Bairnsdale    |                               | <a href="#">BADMAC</a>              |
| 2 – 4 Nov   | Warbirds over Bairnsdale              | Goon Nure, Bairnsdale    |                               | <a href="#">BADMAC</a>              |
| 22-24 Nov   | Bordertown Scale Glider Fun Fly       | Bordertown Airport, S.A. |                               | <a href="#">SSL</a>                 |

Mammoth Scale Fly-in dates sourced from [ModelFlight website](#). The poster in last month's Aspectivity was sourced from the [Valley Radio Flyers website](#) which was still showing last year's poster in June this year and still is in early July. However, see the email in the red box below. As Editor I should have picked up that the dates on the poster were for 2023. Well done to Ojars Balodis for picking this up. Also see item from Ojars below on pages 7 & 8.

Also see more RC events listed on the [VMAA website](#) and in the [VMAA News](#).

*[Ed. Received 12 June 2024 by email.]*

Hi Nigel,

Thank you for reaching out to confirm the dates for our 41<sup>st</sup> Mammoth Scale Fly In. I can confirm the dates for this year's event are the 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 2024.

Kind regards,

Warren Smith  
Valley Radio Flyers Secretary

*[Ed. Apologies to anyone else misled by the Mammoth Fly In date published in June Aspectivity.]*

**WHAT DO YOU CALL AN AIRPLANE THAT FLIES BACKWARDS? A RECEDING AIRLINE.**

# Training

VARMS training sessions are free to members and the public and are run at Rowville from 10am to noon every second Sunday. You will learn to fly a two-channel glider. Training can take you from beginner to your bronze wings and going solo through to silver and gold wings and becoming an instructor.

|          |                            |                         |                          |                          |                           |
|----------|----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>L</b> | 14 <sup>th</sup> July      | 28 <sup>th</sup> July   | 11 <sup>th</sup> August  | 25 <sup>th</sup> August  | 8 <sup>th</sup> September |
|          | 22 <sup>nd</sup> September | 6 <sup>th</sup> October | 20 <sup>th</sup> October | 3 <sup>rd</sup> November | 17 <sup>th</sup> November |

## General Meeting

The next general meeting will be 7:30pm Friday 12 July at the VARMS clubrooms.

## Member profile

by Ojars Balodis

Thanks Nigel.

I only picked up the wrong date for the 41<sup>st</sup> Mammoth Fly In because I thought I may have an opportunity to go there. I actually attended the very first (and second) mammoth scale meeting near Shepparton many years ago with John Gottschalk.

I'm currently semi-retired living in Gippsland at Lake Glenmaggie on a private airstrip.



Unfortunately, I'm rarely in Melbourne and when I am, it's usually visiting my business Plastics for Industry in Keysborough. I still haven't had an opportunity to visit the new clubhouse and flying field. Will make an effort to call past and have a look. It's a credit to everyone that the club has managed to achieve it.

Because I live on an 800m private airfield, all my model flying is done here.

**SAW A COPPER WEARING A PILOT'S UNIFORM. TURNED OUT HE WAS ONE OF THOSE PLANE CLOTHES POLICE.**





BTW, I read that the club has a laser cutter. Please let it be known that if the club would like pieces of perspex to use, let me know, as we have plenty to give away.

Attaching some pictures of interest.



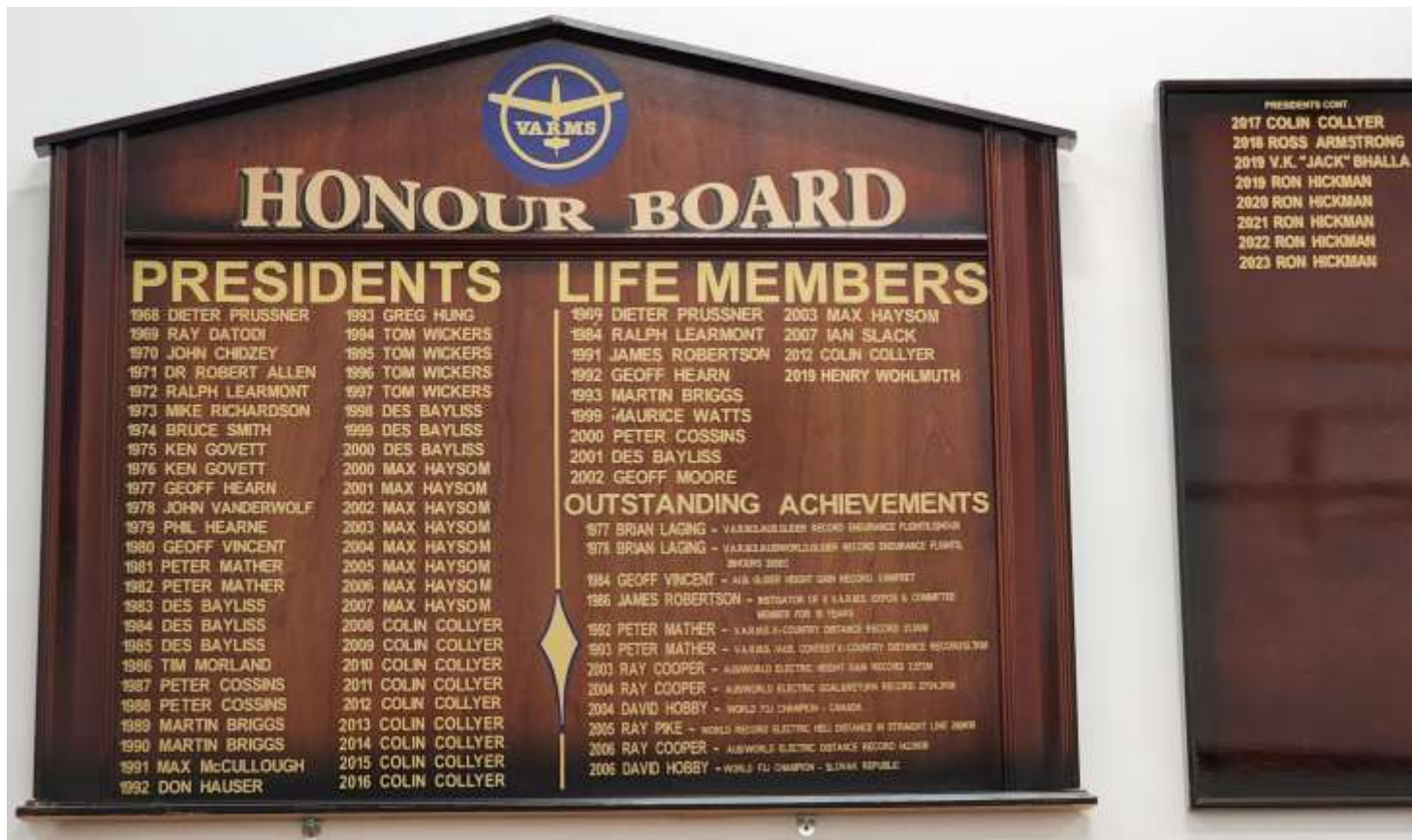
Have been flying my full size self-launching glider (an ASH31Mi) over the last eight months from Benalla and Tocumwal. Hence even the modelling sometimes takes a back seat.

Ojars.

## News from the Committee

- The MAAA “Jungle” program for memberships has not transpired. VARMS memberships are now being taken through a new VARMS Membership Portal prepared by Evan Green. Anyone unable to renew online may request a paper form from the Secretary.
- Five new member applications were approved this month.
- The VARMS AGM will be held immediately prior to the General Meeting on 9 August. The Committee gives notice of intention to propose Ron Hickman for Life Membership. Nomination and proxy forms are included on page 4 above. Who are our current Life Members? This is all listed on the VARMS Honour Board photographed below on the club house west wall.

**Nigel Murray, Editor**



## VIPAMS commissioned

**On 9/06/2024, Anthony Peate wrote:**

Good news. I have finished the development, testing and installation of the VARMS air-conditioner monitor. It works by using an infra-red LED to send a turn-off command to the Toshiba air-conditioner if it's been left on for two hours without any detected activity on the Toshiba IR remote control. Count down warning beeps are sounded at 2 minutes, 1 minute, 30 seconds and 10 seconds to remind members in the club house the air-conditioner is soon to be turned off. Any action on the Toshiba remote control will reset the turn-off timer to two hours. There is also an indicator LED that blinks long on, short off while in two-hour count down state and long off short on while aircon is in the off state.

While in off state, turn-off IR commands are sent every 30 minutes as a belts and braces measure to ensure it remains off. The Toshiba IR remote can still be used as normal to operate the air-conditioner including turning it off immediately.

The photo below shows it's a very small, unobtrusive black box that's powered from a 5V USB power pack. Follow the white clips to the black box with the red light. It consumes less than 100 milliwatts of power.



I spent quite a bit of R&D time reverse engineering the Toshiba IR pulses and had to develop custom C code as the standard IR control software library for the Arduino micro-controller doesn't support the Toshiba IR command protocol because it used much larger data packets for each command. This included analysis with my digital storage oscilloscope ensuring the generated IR pulses matched those from the Toshiba controller.

I was thinking we could call it the VIPAMS (VARMS Idiot Proof Air-conditioner Monitoring System).

I will collect and send receipts for reimbursement of cost which should be less than \$45.

*[Ed. The purpose of Anthony's efforts here was to reduce the power draw on the battery when the air-conditioner is inadvertently left running. Great work Anthony!]*



**by Anthony Peate**

The next club aerotow is Saturday the 13th of July, weather permitting. Aerotow is normally held on the Saturday after the monthly Friday General Meeting. Check the Events calendar on the [VARMS website](#).

VARMS is keen to encourage members who haven't tried aerotowing to give it a go. This includes both new glider pilots and new tug pilots.



The timings for the day are: 11:30am BBQ lunch; 11:50am Pilots' briefing; 12:00pm start aerotowing.

Here are the dates for the next twelve months:

- Saturday 13th July 2024
- Saturday 10th August 2024
- Saturday 14th September 2024
- Saturday 12th October 2024
- Saturday 9th November 2024
- Saturday 14th December 2024
- Saturday 11th January 2025
- Saturday 15th February 2025
- Saturday 15th March 2025
- Saturday 12th April 2025
- Saturday and Sunday 10th & 11th May 2025

(VARMS Inter club Aerotow weekend)

- Saturday 14th June 2025

#### **Other Aerotow Events**

- Cootamundra (To be confirmed): 27th to 29th of September 2024
- Border Town 2024: 22nd to 24th November
- Jerilderie 2025: 18th to 21st of April

## **Captain Blonkhead**

**by Colin Smith and Glenn Salisbury**

*Who or what was "he, she, or it" and why is the name on our fridge?*

I was asked by a non-member to whom I had passed the latest Aspectivity "who was this Captain Blonkhead" as mentioned in the magazine and displayed prominently on the fridge door. So, my thought process was, why not enlighten everybody as to who and what the venerable Captain was. Most editors are always crying out for articles, plus we have lots of new members and so it's a good idea to refresh those long-standing members' memories with a bit of a nostalgic laugh or two.

Captain Blonkhead was in fact Max McCullough and he earned his nickname as a non de plume when he drew the cartoons for Aspectivity while I (Colin) was Mr. Ed. We have to go back to last century when modellers actually made things and then flew them, broke them and then repaired them to fly them again. Radios were controlled by oscillating crystals so only a few could fly at the same time or risk shooting down another flyer. Not like today when its "wham, bang ... thank-you model shop"; let's just dump the bits and buy a new one.

New ones took time and patience to create. Oh, the good old days when Mt Hollowback could be slope soared without fear and we could use farmers' fields to stand in without the risk of being bio-securi-fried. Fuel was cheap, so long journeys could be undertaken regularly and without fear of having your photo taken along the way. Yep, the good old days.

Anyway, Max was an 'old school' modeller. Not too fussed about e-this or e-that, he loved creating planes from plans. His specialty was Power Scale Soaring (PSS) models built to launch from the slope and there was an abundance of free plans as freebees in most model magazines. Wot, Max buy a plan ... never! Anybody remember monthly magazines, those glossy paper things that you could read and pass around and they had content done by experts? Not the crap stuff we get on the internet nowadays: "*The box arrived but the plane looked lovely, and I will fly it sometime soon*". Jeez, what crap! Anyway, Max could get a lump of white foam and grind the hell out of it with a wire brush in a power drill until it roughly resembled the kind of wing he wanted. Then out with the old-fashioned sanding blocks and finally cover it in white glue and brown

paper and a new PSS sloper was born. Always over-elevated to blazes; he never did refine them but by heavens they looked good in the air. That's where his painting and artwork came to the fore.

To brighten things up and take the "Mick" out of members and occurrences, we instigated a cartoon for the newsletter where I supplied the words and the Captain the drawings. But I digress. Captain Blonkhead was Max McCulloch who was an avid modeller but he revelled in Power Scale Slope (PSS) models along with another club member Glenn Salisbury, and I think it fair to say that they tried to outdo each other with their creations. Glenn always won by a mile but Max was always a close second and, being a retired sign-writer, his decals were superb. Oops, I should have said he was a very slightly dyslexic sign-writer but also with an irascible streak. Have I got that right Glenn? He was followed everywhere by his Jack Russell cross named Jack and, unlike other mutts, Jack never trod on a plane. Humans did, but not Jack. By the same token, he never found or retrieved a model either but Jack was loved by all, a truly great little character.

Anyway, the name started to evolve during one week at Camperdown when we were all slope soaring and it was stinking hot on the slope and there were many cows in the field and we all know how flies like cows and their deposits ... and humans ... but I am getting too far ahead.

In those day we were grappling with 29Meg and the new-fangled 36MHz frequencies and the ever-present keyboard so it was imperative to check to see who else was on your frequency, plus the radio gear was on the large side ... still. A Hitec 303 servo was small! We went as a group and took wives and partners and had "tiffin" after a day on the slope where copious quantities of glider fuel were consumed and the day's events dissected ... as you do. I should add that slope flying has to be learned due to the wind variations. Lob the model off and oops, there she goes, over your head and BANG into the trees. Slopers will know what I mean, power fliers maybe not.

As I recall, the regulars were Colin Collyer, and in cabins we had John and Lois Lee, the Doncaster lads and Barry and Pam DeKuyper. Max and whoever he was with at the time (but that's another lot of stories), Brian and Ruth Spencer plus me and my long-suffering wife Kay, Ian and Heather Slack, Martin and Win Hopper. All of us in vans or tents. Glenn and the Canberra contingent stayed in town at one of the pubs or a motel if funds allowed.

I may have missed some, so apologies but it was quite a regular gathering and we had far more sites available than nowadays. This sad state of affairs being due to "wokeism and elf-n-safely" etc., etc., etc.

Anyway; the very first afternoon at tiffin, Max was explaining how and why he had swapped out his white work van that he used to sleep in, for a small-engined Holden Statesman and a caravan. This started when he was asked why he had jacked up his recently acquired "Viscount" caravan and Max couldn't understand the humour associated with the new signage he had over-written on the rear of the van: "Vicount" and up to when he sold it, he didn't realise his mistake. I did say slightly dyslexic before, didn't I ... *Max you plonker!* I know this very well, 'cos I bought the van from him.

True to form, Brian Spencer was on it like a rat up a drainpipe and cleaned those brakes, but I digress as Max was recounting how the car didn't pull when towing and while he was struggling to climb up the Westgate Bridge a truck had slowed and the passenger leaned out the window and shouted:

***"MATE ... yer van's on fire!"***

He had driven all the way from Rowville with the van's handbrake on and was followed or rather chased by clouds of smoke and he didn't understand why other motorists were flashing him, oops. Anyway, he coasted down the hill and let the brakes cool then continued down to Camperdown. Brian Spencer could not resist helping anybody in trouble, as anyone who knew Brian will testify ... *Max you plonker!*

Next episode involved the tiffin time (4.00ish) and those flies. It was hot, so we were sitting around relaxing in shorts as usual, re-hydrating with glider fuel and that fizzy lolly-water when Max came storming in jumping about and complaining about those BL\*\*DY FLIES. "Where's the Aerogard?" he shouted. Somebody pointed at a shelf, whereupon Max grabbed a can and liberally sprayed his arms and legs, then fortunately looked at what he was holding before doing his face: 3M 77, the best and strongest spray adhesive ever made! I won't talk about the noises emanating from the old shower block. Suffice to say the smell of turpentine was all pervading, as was the tirade of bad language from Max's vicinity. *Max you plonker!*

His next “cats-arse-trophy” was on a cooler day after he had bought a pre-cooked chook from Safeway (that’s Woolies for any youngsters who may be country members) for lunch. The next day he was re-heating the remains of the chook, still in its original silver-foil lined bag. His microwave was better than a fireworks display with all the sparks, etc. coming from it. Max said the chook tasted a bit of paper! I wonder why?  
*Max you are a plonker!*

Later the same day it turned much cooler and, instead of tiffin, a hot drink was called for. Max did his best effort yet, and he poured a Cup-a-Soup sachet into one of those old rigid thin white polystyrene cups, filled it with cold water and then put it in the microwave for a quick meal. He actually switched it on, then sat down and watched the turntable start turning ... and the polystyrene mug slowly collapsing. Panic-stricken, his howls could be heard a long way away. But Max, being Max, solved his problem by simply pouring the microwave mess into a bowl ... then drank the lot. He reckoned it tasted a bit plasticky. *Max you plonker!*

By the end of that week, he was actually calling himself “a right plonker”. An expression or description which came from a pommy TV series called “Only Fools and Horses” starring David Jason as Inspector Jack Frost. He had a sense of humour at times, did Max.

Leura Hotel and the HUGE steaks (750 or 900gms and about 25-30mm thick) that overlapped a big oval plate and if you ate it all you got your name on the wall of fame as glutton or fatty (or was it Miss Piggy?). I clearly remember him and Glenn arguing with the staff who refused to acknowledge the meal’s completion because they had left all the fat on the side. They offered to eat the equivalent weight of steak or even chips to finish the challenge but the employees would have none of it. No free beer, no name on the wall for prosperity. They did try for two consecutive nights, but no luck. *Max you plonker!*

Camperdown had a new Two Dollar shop and its owner was operating the till. Max kept returning and spent all day chatting her up ... only to find out that her husband was a she! *Don’t know that story ... Glenn.*

Poor old Max needed heart surgery back in 1993 after suffering a heart attack. At the '94 Camperdown get-together, Max needed to land urgently after losing much height (a common situation for the Captain). We were flying at the Vet’s, a property on the Western side of *Lake Gnotuk* (a smaller lake adjacent to and north of Lake Bullen Merri), and he landed his little Spitty gently in the small quarry just beyond the fence. He asked if the fence was armed and was told the lekky was turned off. He grabs the wires with both hands simultaneously and starts to shake vigorously! Oops, someone had forgotten to turn the electric fence off. He kept yelling “Glenn! My heart!” *Yep – a plonker!*

Max and Glenn designed and built a lovely pair of Canberra bombers. We were all flying at the point with said models and Max suddenly asked in a panicky tone “where’s my plane?” The old bugger had crossed paths with a 2-channel thermal plane in the air and started to fly it instead of the stubby, short-winged PSS model.

How can anyone get confused between the Canberra (top) and this (below)?  
*Plonker!*



Night flying became a “thing” at Camperdown; starting with torches and spotlights to illuminate the gliders of the brave pilots and then we started using cyalume sticks (glow sticks) taped to the models. Max never partook in night flying but was an avid spectator and stick-stirrer. One night he thought it would be funny to break open said green cyalume stick into his stubby. “Look everyone, my beer’s green!” he proudly announced. An hour or so later, the chemical having mixed with the amber ale and whatever he had for dinner, Max was complaining incessantly of feeling ill. *Plonker!*

Another year Max has yet another new girlfriend whom he has invited to Camperdown. He agrees to pick her up on his way through on Friday afternoon and they would travel down together. Now Max loved his slope soaring so much (and Camperdown being the highlight of his year) that on the Wednesday he got itchy feet and couldn’t wait to get down there. Friday evening comes along and he finally remembered that he forgot all about her! He spent more time that weekend in the public phone box at the park entrance (pre mobile phones) than he did flying. She wouldn’t answer the phone and for some reason that Max could never fathom, she never wanted to see him again ... *Plonker!*

What was his next notable cats-arse-trophy? We won’t mention Val the nympho and the Nullabor plus the VW combi van. Nah, not here, ’cos in reality that’s a complete book’s worth, especially describing the

comings and goings after a bottle or two of glider fuel.

Finally, getting to the point. And, oh yes, he moved house after selling his last one via telephone while he was at Camperdown. He eventually found a place at Rowville and although he inspected it while it was empty, it was not until moving-in day that he and I (Glenn talking now) found the second bedroom to contain a mattress, a dresser and clothing. In the kitchen there was even a fridge; it became obvious that someone was still living there. Max was as nervous as all get-out of how this “tenant” or rather “lodger” would react when told they had to leave. Max begged me to stay and handle the situation for him. When the bloke got “home” I was standing in the doorway blocking re-entry. Let’s face it, with me in a doorway the only thing getting past would be a feed of some sort or a sheet of paper with dollar signs on it. Anyway, to cut a long story short, the bloke returned the next day to find all his possessions on the grass. For some unknown reason he never did collect the fridge. Max didn’t need another one so he donated it to VARMS for use at the High Street Road site. For once in his life, he showed modesty and said he didn’t want anyone to know that he made the donation, hence the name of Captain Blonkhead, and that is the complete story about the fridge ... unless you know more facts:

like when he reversed his car into his lounge room window ...

OR ...

his episodes with the fish ‘n chip shop owner at Camperdown ...

OR ...

They are numerous and humorous.



Seen in the Rowville clubhouse – just hanging around.



**WHAT DID THE KAMIKAZE PILOT TELL HIS STUDENTS? WATCH CLOSELY, I'M ONLY GOING TO SHOW YOU ONCE.**

# Jerilderie photos 2024

by Mike Ansell

Here are some more photographs taken by Mike Ansell at the LSF F5J competition at Jerilderie. The person launching the F5J glider is Bruce Clapperton. I couldn't speak to him because, like everyone else, he was



busy flying. There were fewer winch gliders there this year.







Jim Houdoulakis did a mighty save to get his glider back to the finish line and complete a heat on the first day of the competition. He was probably twice tree height (up in the Wimmera the trees aren't that high) and probably at the north east boundary of

the race course the competition was held on. The glider looked like it might crash. It was flying so wild - the sort of flying one sees when the pilot has to take time to process what he thinks he has seen when the plane is nearly out of sight. A few of the others who had seen it said: "Well done to get the glider home". The grass and the wet ground made for soft spot landings this year.



# VARMS Aerotow pics

by Geoff Hearn

These pictures were taken at a recent Rowville aerotow.



Andrew Allen's recently completed scratch-built Zephyrus scale sail-plane, yellow fuselage.



General view of three ES52 short-wing Kookaburra models and the Zephyrus. The photograph below, from left to right shows George Buzuleac, Geoff Hearn and Peter Raphael with their ES52 Kookaburra models. All models have been built from Buzuleac plans.

The model in the centre of the picture below, owned by Geoff Hearn, was built by Norman Ripp and recently re-finished by Peter Raphael. Peter's model was originally constructed to frame completion by the late John Lee. Peter has covered the model, painting it and installing the radio gear.

PILOT: "WE HAVE REACHED OUR CRUISING ALTITUDE, SO MOVE ABOUT AS YOU WISH, BUT PLEASE STAY INSIDE THE PLANE TILL WE LAND. IT'S A BIT COLD OUTSIDE AND WALKING ON THE WINGS AFFECTS THE FLIGHT PATTERN."

AND, AFTER LANDING: "THANK YOU FOR FLYING BUSINESS EXPRESS. WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED GIVING US THE BUSINESS AS MUCH AS WE ENJOYED TAKING YOU FOR A RIDE."



There's been a bit of a cool spell this week in southern Victoria and Rowville has been no exception.



# VARMS Office bearers

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VARMS Web Site – <http://www.varms.org.au> – for the most up to date information

If you change your address, please notify the Registrar and the VMAA, so we can maintain the correct addressing of this Newsletter. If you are interested in joining VARMS, or learning more about our activities, please contact the Secretary or any Committee member.



## Victorian Association of Radio Model Soaring Inc.

Affiliated with Federation Aeronautique Internationale (FAI),  
The World Air Sports Federation, Organisation No. A0001504U,  
Model Aeronautical Association of Australia (MAAA), and  
Victorian Model Aeronautical Association (VMAA)



VARMS inc. was formed in 1968 to bring together aero-modellers who were interested in building and flying radio-controlled gliders. Members fly at many places and the club has just established a new base on Police Paddocks at 1405 Stud Road Rowville, an outer eastern suburb of Melbourne, Australia with the assistance of Knox City Council.

VARMS organises competitions in slope and thermal soaring and members operate models from fun-fly to scale, open competition, aerotow, bungee, winch and electric gliders. Members also fly a range of power and rotary wing models.

General Meetings are held at 2:00pm on the second Sunday of each month (except January) at the club rooms in Rowville. Visitors are welcome. Formalities, and sometimes a special presentation, are usually followed by lively discussion on matters of interest to aero-modellers followed by a cup of your favourite brew.



**If undelivered return to:**  
**VARMS Inc.**  
**P.O. Box 4096**  
**KNOX City Centre VIC 3152**

