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HOLDFAST BUZZ

Holdfast Model Aero Club Inc

modelflight RC

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This year is Holdfast Model Aero Club's 70th (Platinum) anniversary. From humble beginnings in 1956 the club has grown in membership and embraced new radio control technology as well as the ubiquitous foamie, a far cry from the days of control line and free flight. You can read about the club's history in this issue of BUZZ.

Got a story or photo to share? Send it
to the editor at
buzz@holdfastmac.asn.au



The HMAC newsletter is your vehicle for sharing information, experiences, building projects etc. with your fellow members. If you have photos of your latest model, a construction in progress or handy tip you'd like to share, please send it to The Editor at buzz@holdfastmac.asn.au for inclusion in a future edition of BUZZ.



From the President

It's the time of year when our field cracks up. We budget \$6,000 for water, but it's hard to keep enough moisture in the clay to prevent it drying out in very hot weather. I'm very pleased that guys are filling cracks as they appear and we had a mini tipper load of 80/20 soil/organic dumped next to the pilot shed to make the task easier.

Club President Andy Hollitt

Kirk Winters organised the Bunnings BBQ on 29 November 2025 which earned the club \$1,700. Great effort by everyone! It's a lot of work for a few members (and their wives). It's also something of a gamble as the club has to invest \$850 and if it poured with rain, we'd be lucky to get that back.

The kitchen was smelly. I found that the whirly-gig vent had a plate above it, which prevented air extraction. The north wall vent was blocked with shade cloth. On the south vent I removed the entire panel behind the grille with a jigsaw. Much better air flow in there now.

Thanks to Mike Nelson for finding us a shiny new fridge for the old kitchen.

The club finances are looking good. We reckon it costs \$20,000 to run HMAC for a year and we've got that. Income from membership fees was \$15,000, I sold the container and some other stuff for \$3,500, the BBQ fetched \$1,700, bank interest will fetch \$1,000 and we've had donations totalling \$1,000 (thank you). But next year will be tough. Break even, or go broke!

Thanks to Allan Ayles and Graham Paterson for tractor repairs and maintenance. We now have a nice drip tray under the tractor, a new exhaust stack and no leaking diesel. There's also a sign warning that the roller door must be fully open before backing out the tractor!

Night flying is something different and you'll find an article in this Buzz. Great to have a nap then come here at 9 pm after a hot day and fly in the dark for an hour or so.

Back to the drawing board for the turn light on the southern fence. It was good while it lasted. I had the LED mounted in a very nice cast housing and it got cooked on a hot day and died.

As I write this it's the time of year that Aldi sells 'Lidl Gliders' as Christmas presents for the kids; and HMAC members. Ian Briggs and I walked out of the store with 8 boxes between us. Neil Oxley is an avid builder. It's fun to convert these little \$10 foamie chuck gliders to RC. K Mart sells similar. There's a Facebook group and it's fascinating what builders do to these things: swing wings, all moving tail plane, turned it into gyrocopter, dual fuselage, biplane, pusher prop, motor on a pylon, etc. The sky's the limit!

We are mostly a fixed wing model aircraft club, but FPV quadcopters are fun. As we are an MAAA field you must have a spotter when flying with goggles, or when flying by looking at a monitor. LOS (Line of Sight) is when you see the quadcopter at all times. As with fixed wing, you must be qualified to fly a quadcopter at HMAC. Search for 'MAAA Multi Wings test' and ask any two instructors to run the test for you. The test is done LOS. Having said this, I love my Flywoo LR4 and there are far more interesting places to fly FPV than HMAC!

Pylon racing with FPV Race Wings would be fun. There's an article in this Buzz.

There's now a small broom in the brick out-house, also watch out for snakes.

We like flying but we don't like flies! Thanks to Ian Briggs who fitted fly traps as a Christmas present to the club. This has made a huge dent in the HMAC fly population.

It's always windy and our Sunday morning training program has been severely impacted. There's no training on the first Sunday of the month. Of the remainder since June, 14 were flyable and 20 were not. In addition to Sunday morning we therefore need to conduct training midweek, (weather permitting) or we won't get any new members.

At this time of the year, the UV index is literally off the scale (the scale goes to 11 and current readings are 14), even on a cloudy day. Be aware of any changes on your skin, particularly if it's dark. A melanoma initially spreads, then grows down through the skin and in to the lymphatic system to spread cancer cells everywhere. This can all happen in under 6 months, so don't wait, get checked. I don't want to be selling off your planes at a deceased estate sale.



HMAC 70th (Platinum) Anniversary Year 1956-2026



Holdfast Model Aero Club History

In the mid-1950s, when most model aircraft were control liners, fliers from all over the Adelaide suburbs would converge on Colley Reserve at Glenelg on the first Sunday each month, set up three flying circles, and take over the area for the afternoon.



A group of them got together, and on the 10th August 1956, Geoff Barron convened a meeting of 14 in Trevor Potter's garage and formed a club which they named Holdfast Model Aero Club because it started at Glenelg, on Holdfast Bay.

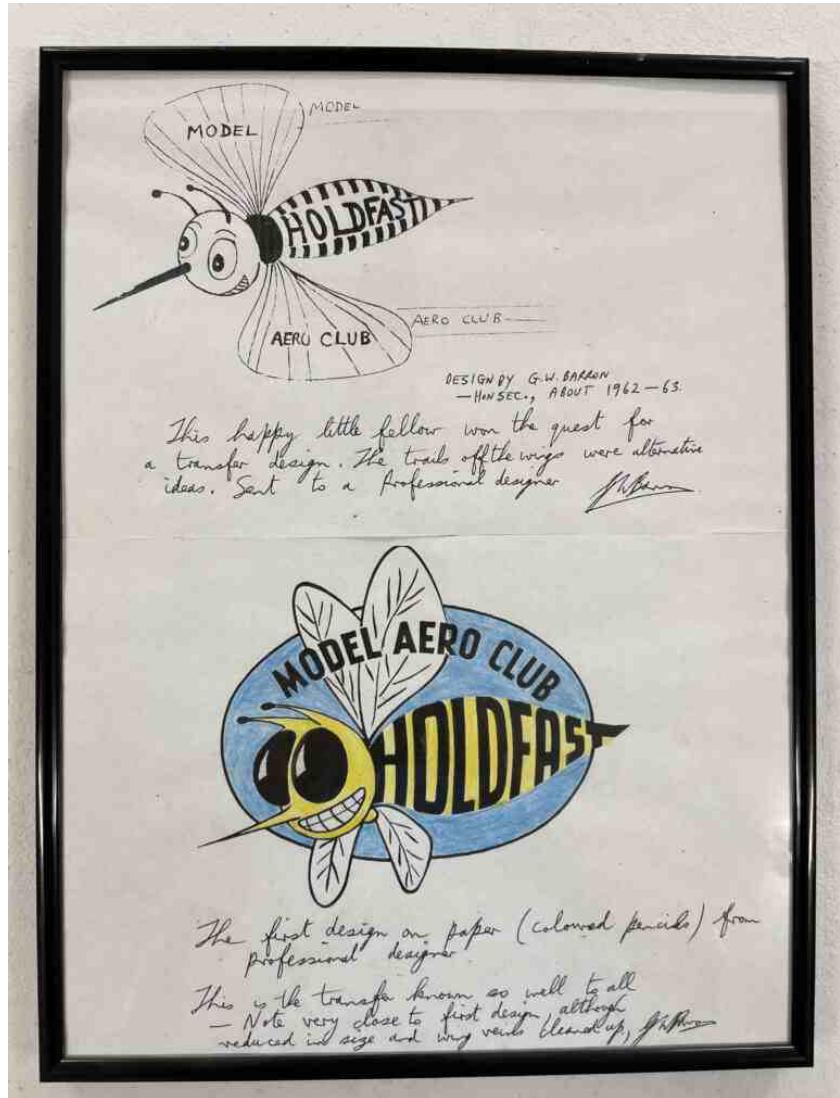
The now legendary Bee logo was designed Geoff Barron and at about 1962-63 was adopted as the club logo following changes made by a professional artist. A photo of the original Bee logo hangs in our clubhouse.

Flying sites were many with most eventually being lost due to noise. They included Brighton Primary School, West Beach, Colley Reserve, Morphettville Race Course and Noarlunga. Over the years the club has moved many times for various reasons, but since the late 1970s has been at the current site at the corner of Majors Road and Lonsdale Road, O'Halloran Hill. This land is leased from the State Government and has been the most permanent in the history of the club.

The club has continued to foster new flyers over the years to current times where we have a very professional team of instructors to teach radio control. Radio control has taken over from control line, but we still have enthusiasts who continue control line.

Why our Club is named Holdfast

In mid-1836, Colonel William Light, having been appointed South Australian Surveyor-General, arrived in the middle of a storm, on the survey brig "Rapid". When the ship dropped anchor, he was worried whether it would hold. It did hold fast, and so he named the place "Holdfast Bay." On 31 December 1836 the Holdfast Bay settlement was renamed Glenelg, and became the first seat of government of South Australia.





Green tag



Remember to use a green safety tag on your electric model to indicate that it is not armed. Do not arm electric models under the shelters, use one of the arming tables which have restraints. Always keep clear of propellers - they bite!



Beware of heatstroke

Now that hot weather is here, there is a risk of getting heatstroke if you are out in the sun too long without adequate protection and keeping yourself hydrated. Don't spend too much time on the flightline, keep in the shade between flights. Importantly, be aware of the symptoms of heatstroke which can include: high body temperature (above 40 degrees C), confused or agitated behaviour, hot and dry skin, a rapid pulse, and rapid breathing. Other signs can include headache, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, and loss of consciousness.

It's not a good idea to fly on your own as there's nobody around to help you if you suffer heatstroke, some other medical episode or injury.

HMAC Lonsdale Road entry

A recent incident occurred when a visitor to the club, not knowing where the entry gate was situated, had to brake his vehicle hard so as not to miss the gate. Apparently a tailgating vehicle, expecting the vehicle ahead to accelerate to 80 km/h, almost collided with the visitor. It is a timely reminder to club members that it would be prudent to indicate early and position your vehicle as far to the left on Lonsdale Road, as safely possible, as you approach the gate so that following vehicles are not surprised when you slow down to turn in.



Don't let this happen to you



If you see any visitors come to the public viewing area, please spend a few minutes talking to them. If they are interested in having a trial flight, refer them to our website where they can make a booking, provided they are 14 years of age and over.

2025 HMAC Christmas Lunch

The annual HMAC Christmas lunch was held on Sunday, 7th December at Club Marion. Some 35 persons attended - club members, wives, partners as well as our colleagues from Noarlunga and Constellation clubs.

We had a separate room booked, with a bar which catered only for us. The menu was comprehensive and good quality food served.

President Andy Hollitt outlined the background to HMAC's pylon racing (see below) and then presented awards to the winners of the three pylon racing classes:

- Open class - Tom Jacobsen from Noarlunga club
- Standard class - Bryan Christie from Holdfast club
- Electric class - Trevor Pearce from Constellation club.

Afterwards the Modelflight voucher raffle was drawn by Kathy Paterson. Winners were:

- First prize - Phil Norwood (non attendee - presented with his prize later in the day)
- Second prize - Kathy Paterson (no, it wasn't rigged)
- Third prize - Carlo Espartero (a happy chappie)

Activity around the room



Christmas lunch activity continued



Pylon racing trophy awards presented by Club President Andy Hollitt



*Open class winner
Tom Jacobsen
(Noarlunga Club)*



*Standard class winner
Bryan Christie
(Holdfast Club)*



*Electric class winner
Trevor Pearce
(Constellation Club)*

HMAC pylon racing

Pylon racing started at Holdfast around 1996 with very basic glow powered sports models. A few years later, electric power was introduced with a model called the 'Dyna-Mite', which was powered by a Mabuchi motor and NiCad batteries taken from a Dust Buster vacuum cleaner. The group soon went back to using 0.1 cubic inch glow/methanol engines and the event was named "Point Ten Pylon" to differentiate from the much larger and more expensive FAI racers. A simple two pylon course, 100 metres apart was used and remains to this day.

There are three racing categories. Each class has 4 heats on the day and laps are counted and accrued over 10 months (February to November each year). The contestant with the most laps at the end of the year wins.

Open Class: Uses modified 0.1 cubic inch plain bearing glow motors. The airframe is open.

Standard Class: The airframe is restricted to traditional model materials like balsa and plywood and uses a stock standard 0.1 cubic inch glow motor.

Electric Class: The airframe, power train and batteries are restricted.

Tom Jacobsen has been pylon racing at Holdfast for 20 years. Tom has attended national & international pylon racing events.

First place Open Class pylon with 313 points: Tom Jacobsen from Noarlunga Club.

Bryan Christie has only been competing for 5 years, but according to John Jefferson he's an aggressive competitor and they've swapped paint and demolished each other's planes over the years.

First place Standard Class pylon with 253 points: Bryan Christie from Holdfast Club.

For 5 years Trevor Pearce has travelled to Holdfast to compete in electric pylon. Trevor has also flown F3D internationally. These planes whizz around the pylons at around 300kph. Don't blink!

First place Electric Class pylon with 553 points: Trevor Pearce from Constellation Club.

Modelflight raffle draw



Kathy Paterson doing the honours



Phil Norwood receiving first prize
later that day



Kathy with second prize



Carlo "Court Jester"
Espartero with third prize

Seen at the field



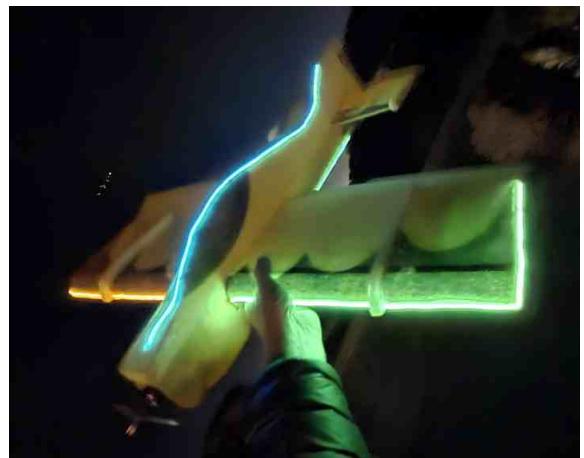
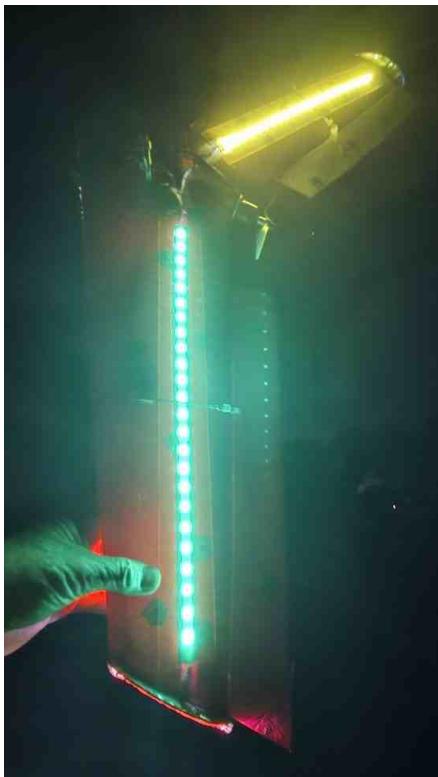
Neil Oxley with his "Aldi Special"

Night Flyer

As Holdfast is an MAAA model flying field we are permitted to fly at night. We're just required to light the pits area to prevent a tripping hazard. It's a good thing to do after a really hot day. Have a nap in the afternoon and fly in the cool of the evening from 9 pm.

There are various ways to get a night flyer. The easiest is just to buy one. There are a number of models that have coloured light strips built in, the Hobbyking Flybeam, the Radian Night Flyer and several Flex Innovations models come to mind, but it's easy and fun to build something yourself. Caution, flashing LEDs look cool, but can make orientation at night difficult.

My Assassin Combat Wing is a hoot to fly and as it's made of EPP (not EPO) it's very, very tough. I simply stuck (white) LED light strips on the wings and tip plates, covered them over with strips of various coloured insulation tape and covered the lot with clear packing tape. The LED strips are 12 volt, so they run perfectly off the balance port of a 3S battery.



Another EPP model has light strings around the perimeter of the fuselage and wings, so you just see the outline of the model when flying at night, but there's a trick. The fuselage is spray painted with fluorescent yellow paint and there are ultraviolet LEDs mounted on the wings, triggered with an electronic switch. When I turn on the UV LEDs they kick the fluoro paint, so you see the whole model, turn off and just the outline remains.

It's really up to your imagination. EPP models are good because they're very tough and easily repaired. Landing at night can be tricky if you can't see the ground! I'm thinking a hula hoop covered in LEDs and flown under a quadcopter would look cool.

I suggest you search 'Radio Control Night Flyer' and select 'Images' to give you ideas. Jaycar sells electroluminescent wiring (light strings) and the power supply, as well as various LEDs. Note that individual LEDs must be used with a series resistor. eBay has 12 volt lighting LED strip on spools and shops selling Christmas decorations are a good source of interesting LEDs. Something different!

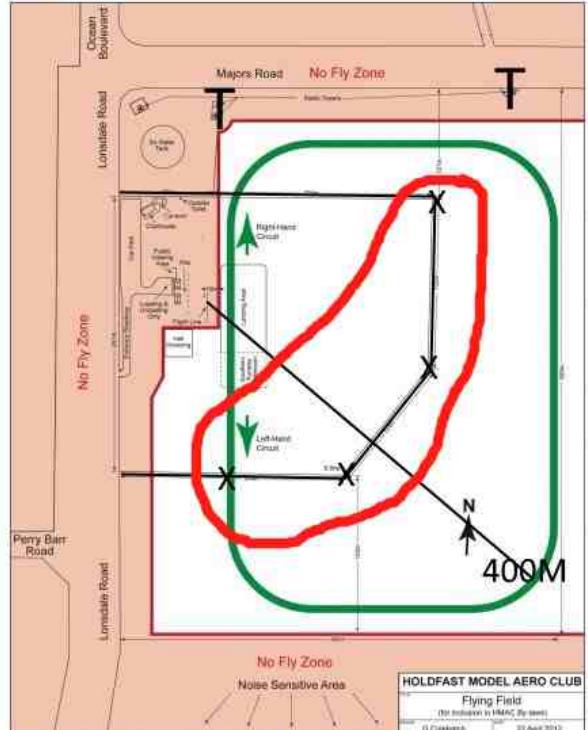
Andy Hollitt

FPV Racing at HMAC

Holdfast started pylon racing at our current field some 30 years ago, and it's still active with contestants from Noarlunga and Constellation clubs as well as our own. New technology has created opportunities for FPV racing. Outlined below is a suggested racing format that could be tried here.

THE COURSE: Black is the HMAC boundary fence. X marks the 4 pylons. Green is the normal circuit pattern and red the FPV flight path. The pylons are simply PVC down pipe spray painted with red stripes and are permanent. 3 posts are already there.

THE FIXED WING MODEL is the S800 Reptile EPP wing from Bangood. The airframe costs \$100 and I run a Prime 3S 1300 120C Lipo and an APC 6X4 EP prop (the writing faces forward!) from Modelflight, a Turnigy Plush 30A ESC, RS2205 2300kv CCW motor (mounted on 4 of 10mm standoffs) and 2 of Tower Pro MG90S wing servos. I use a 3D printed 'S800 nose for 4S Lipo' from Thingiverse, Ian Briggs or Carlo Espartero can help you with this. Wearing goggles, the S800 is best bungee launched off a ramp, using a foot pedal release located inside the pilot safety fence. If all pilots do this, it makes starting a race



MY LAUNCHER is 12mm RHS steel 1.6m long X 300mm wide. One end is 200mm high, the other 300mm. The bungee cord is 6mm X 10m, cloth wrapped. At one end is a ring for a tent peg. The other end has 1.9m & 2.4m lines with rings. The shorter line hooks to the S800 belly, the longer one to the release pedal. 10 paces stretches the bungee to 5kg tension.

THE QUADCOPTER is anything fitted with a 3S 2200 Lipo. These carbonfibre ex race quads are cheap, tough and plenty fast enough for fun racing at HMAC, but do require a lot of technical skill to set up.



LEGAL FPV RACING, summarised from section 9 of MOP066:
(The Woodville FPV quadcopter racing club, AFPVR operate this way)

9.1 CONDITIONS: These rules only apply when the following conditions are met:

- There must be at least one gate and one flag defining the course.
- Low latency video feed between the aircraft and video receiver.
- The racecourse is to be within a designated area, with a suitable run off area in the event of a crash or failsafe (minimum 30m exclusion zone).
- Quadcopters are operated lower than 100m (which is below the tree line).
- Race wings may use a higher altitude.

9.2 SAFETY: The Event Director (Safety Officer at HMAC) must always take safety into consideration and ensure that everyone complies with HMAC rules.

- All aircraft must be operated within the safety zone and stay 30m from any spectator or persons not associated with operating the model.
- When individual spotters are in use, the pilot must follow their direction.
- All aircraft must be configured with a switch-based arming switch and when disarmed it must immediately stop all motors.
- All aircraft must be configured with a radio failsafe where in the event the aircraft loses signal all motors are stopped immediately (no 2-stage failsafe are allowed).
- If a pilot does not have clear video feed and they are unable to operate their aircraft safely they must land and disarm immediately.

9.3 PARTICIPANTS AND HELPERS: Each participant must be qualified to fly fixed wing or quadcopter as appropriate.

The Concord FPV Race Wing Circuit (they use the S800 also)



Let me know if you are interested. I have an FPV trainer if you'd like to have a go.
Andy Hollitt

Social meeting updates

The 5 December 2025 Friday night social meeting had several interesting presentations. Horst Dahms brought along his large model of a primary glider. These open frame wooden gliders were commonly used by gliding clubs as they could be easily built and repaired by clubs. The model was very detailed.

Bryan Christie brought along an open class and a standard class pylon racer to show us and explained the rules and how these planes operate.

Ian Briggs bought along a box of 3D printed bits which will assemble into a large twin engine aircraft. The fuselage is double wall construction and very smooth. Everything fits together precisely.

There was some discussion about fees, but it was decided that these social nights were for show and tell and guest speakers, not club business.

I finished off by flying my Assassin Night Flyer race wing. I'd like to organise some social events for night flyers.

Andy Hollitt



Horst with his primary glider model



Bryan holding a standard class pylon racer; and an open class pylon racer on the table



Ian with another of his 3D printed models

BOOK REVIEW
AUSTRALIA'S AVIATION HEROES

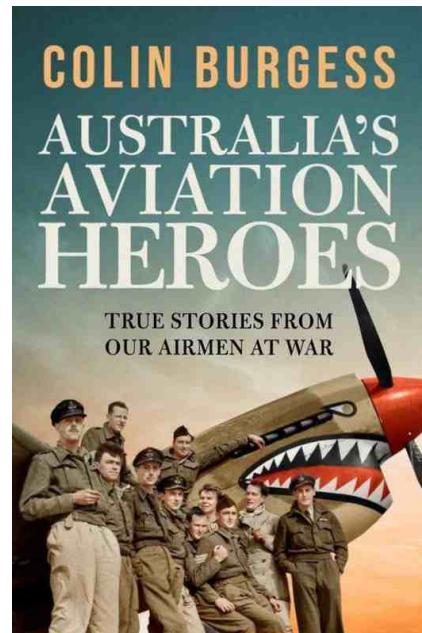
True Stories from our Airmen at War
Colin Burgess, Simon & Schuster 2025
ISBN 9781 7616 3249 5

Review by Robin Shaw

Foreword by AVM David N. Rogers AM RAAF (Ret'd)

This book is another anthology along the lines of those by Michael Veitch that I have previously reviewed. Each chapter is a mini-biography of notable figures in Australian aviation history. Those covered in this volume are:

- Jack Treacy
- Ernie Guest
- 'Scotty' Allan
- Don Bennett
- Joe Herman
- Clive Caldwell
- Phillip Zupp



Most of the chapters are based on the author's interviews of the individuals described. Some of the stories are better known than others. Caldwell's and Bennett's careers are well known. Others like Joe Herman, who survived the fall from an exploding Halifax at over 10,000 feet without a parachute are simply remarkable.

There are a few rather stark errors in the book, for example a statement that the Lockheed L-1049 Constellation was a Boeing aircraft (p.86) but I won't belabour these. The chapter on Don Bennett does note his irascibility with those who disagreed with him or fell short of his standards, but, (probably necessarily due to the need for brevity in such a book), makes no mention of the initial rejection of the specialised pathfinder squadrons by the bomber Command C-in-C AM Harris and the complicated politics that led to the formation of 8 Group under Bennett's command. Likewise, Caldwell's rigid adherence to 'big wing' fighter tactics in the defence of the Top End in 1943 has been questioned in other histories.

The chapter on Phillip Zupp is interesting, telling as it does of his transition from terminated RAAF trainee ground crew to Army Commando in WW2 to post-war RAAF pilot trainee and his transition from Mustangs via Vampires to Meteors followed by 201 Meteor sorties in Korea. The post-war careers of those who decided to stay in aviation were varied – Zupp retired as a NSW Air Ambulance pilot in 1986. Bennett's exploits flying the top element of Mayo Composite mail plane between the wars are also noteworthy.

Overall, I'd rate Australia's Aviation Heroes as a light read but a worthwhile one for the less well-known exploits it describes. Like many books composed of short, summary chapters on sometimes complex matters, it does gloss over key background material such as those mentioned above. However, readers with a general interest in aviation but not needing in-depth analysis will probably enjoy this book.



Flying training

Newcomers to radio control modelling are catered for by setting aside Sunday mornings (except the first Sunday of the month) from 10:00 am when qualified instructors teach all aspects required for the safe operation of model aircraft.

During the training period no other models are allowed to fly, ensuring the least possible distractions to the student. Always check the HMAC website for the latest weather update as we cancel instruction if it is too windy, wet or excessively hot.

New members

John Trakas

Some of you will remember former club member John who last flew here some 9 years ago. John has rejoined the club and once we sign off his flying status you can expect to see him around. Welcome back John.

Drew Robertson

Drew is currently undertaking a commercial pilot licence course at Parafield, but is new to RC flying. We trust you will enjoy the facilities at Holdfast.

Welcome Drew.

Flying achievements

None this period



Buy and Sell Marketplace



If there's any modelling equipment you want to buy or sell, please email a detailed description and photo to the editor (buzz@holdfastmac.asn.au) and it will be advertised in the next issue. Don't forget to include your name and phone number. Your advertisement won't carry over to any subsequent issue of BUZZ unless you make another request. Don't forget there is also a separate Buy and Sell section on our website.

Upcoming events

Pylon racing:	1 February 2026; 1 March 2026
General meeting:	6 February 2026; 6 March 2026
MASA meeting:	12 February 2026

HMAC Committee meeting updates

Your committee meets regularly to discuss and manage the club's ongoing activities to ensure we comply with our obligations to CASA, MAAA, MASA, Department for Environment and Water (our land owner) as well as field operations so that we all can continue to enjoy our model flying.

Summary of Committee meeting 18 November 2025

Financial Reports

Treasurer reported that club membership to end of October totalled 89 persons compared with 103 in Oct 2024. Income vs expenses are about as expected for the month of October. However, there are several large items of expenditure required in the next 6 months. Fundraising at Bunnings BBQ will help offset this as will the possible sale of our shipping container. Not for profit business - HMAC is required to submit an annual self-assessed report to Australian Tax Office by Oct 31 (now completed).

Flying Operations

CFI report distributed. Discussion re minimum age for Juniors - currently stated as 14 years but we do accept some younger persons with the necessary skills by assessment at Come & Try. Discussion on Junior fee being too low (including discounts for part year). Agreed that this should be looked at when next setting fees.

Safety Matters

Annual Risk Assessment of Flyaway incidents required for MAAA/MASA.

Field Report

Irrigation of field not yet required. Modifications to some sprinkler heads on-going. Grass high in outfield. The large tractor is out of service due to damage to exhaust stack. Tractor repairs being done by Allan Ayles. New drivers Ian Briggs and Bryan Christie will learn to operate the tractors following loss of Karl Heberle.

Fence line posts need painting. Working bee required with a number of people.

MASA report

Grants MOP 009 synchronisation between MASA/MAAA for club promotion and projects. Prepare projects in advance anticipating December/January for submissions to MAAA. Working with Children (WWC) checks are still required for instructors.

General Business

Selling process for the empty shipping container (now sold).

Dispose of two trailer loads of tree off cuts.

Extend the pits safety fence. Materials are available from the recent project. Only cost is labour and post. Install in line with existing fence – 3 panels, hole digging plus concrete. Caution re buried pipes.

Investigate shifting the weather station and camera from tractor shed to pilot shed. Data from

Summary of Committee Meeting 16 December 2025

Financial Reports

Membership is 90 compared with 103 at same time last year. Bank balance \$45,051. Income \$3,521 vs expenditure \$761. Highlights included clear profits from raffle (\$431) and Bunnings BBQ (\$1,710). Both fundraisers were less productive than last year. New income of \$3,195 came from the sale of some club assets including the shipping container. The expenditure to date compares favourably with budget estimate and allows for anticipated expenditure on summer watering plus property insurance expected in 2026. It was noted that it costs about \$20,000 annually for the club to operate.

Flying Operations

CFI report highlighted the number of “No Flying” days due to inclement weather such as wind. It was suggested that it may be possible to introduce frequent midweek training on a suitable day, based on the student and instructor availability.

Possible introduction of another mode 2 model set up bringing up to three training aircraft on mode 2.

Safety Matters

Annual Risk Assessment of Flyaway Incidents required for MAAA/MASA.

Field Report

Extensive outer field mowing undertaken. The large tractor should be used for out-field and the smaller ride-on mower only be used for the runway and immediate proximity to pits and clubrooms etc. Two new drivers now rated. All operators to wear dust protection masks.

Tractor repairs to fuel leak and broken exhaust stack have been completed.

More top dressing is required. Some members are actively repairing minor cracks voluntarily.

Buildings Report Better airflow for old kitchen/shed implemented.

MASA Report MASA and MAAA have money to assist clubs.

General Business

Weather camera interruptions again. Possible Wi-Fi shortfall. It was agreed to investigate using a more sophisticated system to connect the modem to weather station, irrigation and field. Large donated refrigerator is now installed in the old clubroom.

For the planned social meeting on 6 February 2026 it was suggested holding an evening fun fly and possible BBQ before the meeting commences.

Top dressing soil required to be placed near pilot shed for easy access.

Proposal that Bronze Wings qualification test should be done on the member's own model instead of the club fleet. To be further considered.

Bunnings BBQ to continue as a primary fund raiser. Discussion in favour of making a booking for 2026.

The 2025 Christmas function at Club Marion was considered to be a success.



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