

BRIEFINGS

Summer Edition

December 2006

Issue 16

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FROST AND FIRE

Forecasters have predicted one of the hottest summers on record for Victoria. With Victoria being one of the most fire prone parts of the world, and suffering from the worst drought this century has lead to an early start to the fire season, with the BK117 fighting fires from mid September.



While the temperatures have been low, the dry conditions and strong winds, have seen the BK been involved in fire fighting operations at Wilson's Prom, Yallourn, Corryong, Barmah and Colac. On one weekend new instructor Peter Jones was in Shepparton on frost control work, while Chief Pilot Ray Cronin was battling a fire in the Barmah State forest!

Kestrel Aviation have geared up for a big season, with the BK117 based at Bacchus Marsh, the Bell 212 at Olinda, another Bell 212 at Mangalore, the Longranger in Canberra as the back up machine to Helicorp's Erickson Skycrane, and the C182 also based at Mangalore. Flying the Longranger based in Canberra, for Helicorp, is John Walsh, who completed his CPLH with Kestrel 4 years ago.

NEW JETRANGER

Kestrel recently purchased a Jetranger from Japan, which is now up and running with the call sign VH-KHY. The machine is in excellent condition and has many extras, including a winch, night sun and ambulance kit.

Kestrel will operate the Jetranger over the summer months, and may consider selling it next year. Interested buyers should contact Ray or Eleanor Cronin by email for more details.

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MANGALORE AIRPORT IMPROVEMENTS

Anyone who has been to Mangalore Airport lately will be amazed at the transformation that has taken place.

Airport owner Colin Rees, shares Kestrel's vision that Mangalore Airport is ideally suited for quality training, and has embarked on a program of improving the facilities.

The construction of 6 new 'barn style' accommodation units has commenced with one already finished. The units will house 2 to 8 people, with different internal configurations to suit different customers requirements.

A canteen has also been installed and should be fully operational by February. The canteen is capable of handling large groups and could also be used as a common kitchen/dining facility for live in students.

Also recently completed is the new 'Lancaster Room', the ample sized room is an ideal conference facility, which could also be used as a large classroom. The Lancaster room is located next to the Airport's Administration area which has also undergone massive transformations in recent months.



KESTREL INSTRUCTOR AWARDED FOR CONTRIBUTION TO AVIATION INDUSTRY



ASFA Meritorious Service Award was presented to Captain Rex Booth for outstanding service and contribution to aviation safety in the Aviation Training sector.

Rex Booth has been a dedicated proponent of aviation safety throughout his 47 year involvement in aviation with a demonstrated passion for training. His experience in aviation is broad having qualified as a gliding instructor at the age of 16, followed by charter, aeromedical and airline flying in Australia and elsewhere in the Asia Pacific region.

Training roles have been a core component of Capt. Booth's career culminating in his retirement from Silk Air in 2002 as an Airbus A320 instructor pilot. At a stage in life where many other pilots may have scaled back their activities Rex embarked on a second aviation career joining Kestrel Aviation at Mangalore, as a helicopter flying instructor and at the same time was contracted by Qantas as an Airbus A330 simulator instructor.

At Kestrel Aviation, Rex is involved in the simulator training programs for pilot aeronautical decision making and instrument and emergency procedures. In addition to his simulator instructing at Kestrel Aviation and Qantas, Rex remains an active helicopter flying instructor and mentor passing on his life long experiences across a variety of aviation industry sectors to both new and old pilots. In recognition of his ongoing commitment to aviation safety and training Rex Booth is a most worthy recipient of the ASFA Meritorious Service Award for 2006.



NEW FLYAWAY LOCATION

It was with some sadness that September's Kulnine Flyaway was to be the last, with the property recently being sold.

From next year however, the Flyaway's will be held at Lake Victoria Station, which is also owned by Ray and Eleanor Cronin, located on the Murray River, on the Southern side of Lake Victoria.

This is a beautiful property, with a great improvement in the sleeping quarters for participants, from the shearer's quarters at Kulnine, to a historic stone cottage built in circa 1820 which is located within the main gardens next to the homestead. The next flyaway is expected to be held in the first 2 weeks of April 2007. Numbers will be limited, people are encouraged to register their interest as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.

INNOVATIVE TRAINING SYSTEM

With the ever increasing demand for flight crew both domestically and internationally, Kestrel has implemented the initial phase of an advanced computer assisted training system.

The brains behind the system, Rick Geary, has designed several educational aids/system to assist in maintaining high educational standards whilst improving student access and efficiencies. Students who train at Kestrel will now have the benefit of these unique tools which will provide them with that valuable edge required when it comes to seeking jobs within the industry.

Well done Rick we look forward to the next phase which we know is only around the corner!



SIMULATOR REPORT

The simulator has experienced a busy quarter, and was fully booked for most of the period. Due to the overload on our Senior Simulator instructor, Rex Booth, Kestrel advertised for the services of another experienced IFR instructor. We were very fortunate to have George Claxton and Geoff Williams both offer their services for the busy periods.

George has many thousands of helicopter instructing hours, and is currently working for Jetstar as a simulator instructor.

Geoff can be hard to catch between his flying engagements all over the world, but is also an experienced helicopter IFR pilot and instructor.

It is always great to see some of the old Kestrel faces pass through the simulator, with Ward Bremmers ex Chief Pilot of Helicopter Resources, now working for CHC coming in with a group of CHC pilots to use the simulator. Ward trained with Kestrel and also worked for Kestrel as an instructor during the late 80s/early 90s.

REX'S PNG ADVENTURE

In October/November 06, Kestrel Instructor Rex Booth generously donated his time and expertise to the Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) to conduct a training course for them in Papua New Guinea. Below Rex shares his experience....

As a long time supporter of MAF I responded to a call in late 2005 for help with a shortage of staff in PNG. In October this year I went to Mt Hagen for four weeks to observe a Twin Otter conversion course, do some flying and report on what I observed.

I attended the Twin Otter ground school and the annual pilots meeting in which I was asked to conduct the life jacket and life raft training as well as part of the annual CRM refresher training. Following the pilots' meeting I went on observation flights.



The strips to which MAF operate average 400 metres in length (shortest 350m) and are usually one way with a slope up to 14%. MAF operate Twin Otters, Cessna 206 and GA 8 Airvans. The strips in the highlands are anywhere from 4500ft AMSL to 6500ft AMSL.

STAFF CHANGES

There have been several staff changes since our last newsletter, starting with Kate Loweke's departure in July to have her baby. Baby Ava was born on 22nd July 2006 and Kate has been enjoying her time at home being a new mum. We expect to see Kate back around the office in the New Year, job sharing with Gina Andrews who took over her position whilst Kate was on maternity leave.

Gina holds a PPLA and her knowledge of aviation has been very helpful. Gina will continue on in a job sharing role upon Kate's return.

Peter Jones has been appointed one of Kestrel's newest instructors after completing his rating earlier in the year.

We also have a new receptionist on staff Alex, who is very excited about her new role at Kestrel Aviation.

It is with great sadness that we also say goodbye to Annette Johnson. Annette has been a loyal and hardworking staff member at Kestrel for the past 3 years, and goes with our blessing and best wishes.

Her dedication and effort will be missed, and we wish her the best of luck with her new employer, Bristow Helicopters. Annette and her partner Craig will relocate to Perth early in the New Year.

PETER BRERETON'S OUTBACK ADVENTURE

"Traffic Mangalore, Aztec Yankee Uniform Alpha taxis for departure RWY 36 for Broken Hill". Yep! that's right, Broken Hill, on the way to places most GA pilots have only read about in ERSA. With the help of the crew at Kestrel and a shiny new endorsement on the PA23 we were off on our 2800 nm round trip to Alice Springs and Ayers Rock.

The initial plan was to take VH-KKM the trusty C182 on the trip to Ayers Rock with my wife and a couple of good friends, however the arrival of the Aztec YUA on the flight line at Mangalore started me thinking, "More speed, More payload, More cost, - well I wont tell the wife about that bit....

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PETER BRERETON'S OUTBACK ADVENTURE continued from Page 3

But it will mean a fair bit more comfort on the long legs across the outback of Australia. Back to school with Capt. Tony Smith, learning the skills required for the Multi-engine Piston endorsement. There is nothing like taking on a new challenge in aviation and the twin is just the machine to try you out. Tony is not only a great instructor, he is also the master of "one liners" like describing the sweat dripping from my armpits as "Character building" and the classic "A twin is only a twin when one of 'em ain't going" – too true.

Like all things aviation the key is in the planning. Route choice, Fuel, Accommodation, hire car, etc had to be arranged and then hope that the weather fitted in with the plan. As luck (or planning) would have it the weather provided some of the highlights of the trip, including a thunderstorm on Uluru (Ayers Rock) and a diversion to William Creek.

Outback Australia is probably renowned for two things, the absolute vastness of the landscape and the friendliness of the people. Always make a point of talking to the locals and they will treat you like royalty. Same goes with ATC, inbound to both Alice Springs and Parafield add "Unfamiliar with location" and the tower will go to great lengths to see you safely into the pattern and onto the ground.

Back home and at work, the message is you have worked hard to gain the skills and privileges of flying, there is no better way to see this great country than from an aeroplane. Forget the excuses, rope in some friends, crank up the engine(s) and get going...



Left:

VH-YUA and pilot Pete Brereton parked outside the Birdsville pub.

Right:

Australian Icon Uluru framed by the wing and Engine of the Aztec.



Left:

Short Final RWY 22 Maree

