



HANGAR NEWS



Vernon Flying Club

6210 Tronson Road
Vernon, B.C. V1H 1N5
Est. 1946

Flight 65

*To Advance, Promote, and Preserve the
Canadian Freedom to Fly*



Who said that pigs can't fly?!

Welcome to the Year of the Pia



Whiskey Tango Foxtrot –

Someone forgot the de-icer?

This was taken outside the clubhouse in early February as the persistent, unseasonably cold weather settled over the Valley for a long haul.

The Snowflakes Wow the Crowd during the Vernon Winter Carnival Parade

(Photos by Edie Schleiss)



Very Sad News**Robert Wallace MACKIE**

Rob, a very well-liked, long term member of the Vernon Flying Club, passed away suddenly and unexpectedly in the Vernon Jubilee Hospital.

He will be fondly remembered by twin brother, Ron and his many friends from the Vernon Airport as well as colleagues from Wardair and Japan Air Lines where he worked as a Flight Engineer.

*Clear skies and calm air
Soar high into the blue bro
Soar high into the blue*

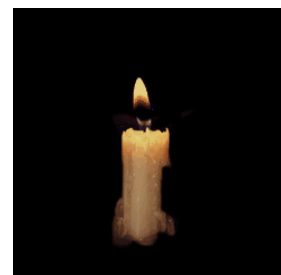
Here are just a few of the comments posted for Rob by his many friends

- A great guy and an asset to the flying community
- An astute problem solver and a great sense of humour
- Always had a smile and a story
- Always a pleasure to fly with over Vernon in his Bonanza
- always had time to hear or tell a story; a highly accomplished man
- Never tired of listening to his flying stories and his many tales of his travels and experiences working in the airline industry
- Rob was a lot of fun and always happy to be around whether it was at his beloved hangar or his dock. He will be missed but not forgotten



A Celebration of Life will be held at the Clubhouse

On Saturday, May 25th from 2:00 to 4:00



SCHOLARSHIPS

Albert Bueckert, Coordinator, is accepting applications for the *VFC Scholarship in Memory of Len Neufeld* until March 15th. The Scholarship was established by Len Neufeld's family and friends following his death in November 2008 to provide a bursary to deserving pilots training at the Vernon Airport. Something that is often forgotten is that licensed pilots who upgrade their skills can apply for the award as well.

Add a new rating to your license and apply for the \$500.00! Expand your horizons and learn something new! Applications will be on the bulletin board in the clubhouse or are available by contacting Albert at ambueckert2014@gmail.com.

The presentation will be held at the April Regular Meeting.

Rust Remover 2019

Doug MacKinnon, RR Coordinator, tells us that planning is well underway for Vernon's Annual Rust Remover scheduled for Saturday, May 4th. Less speakers and longer breaks should give attendees more opportunities to socialize and catch-up with the other members of the flying fraternity. Seminar fee remains the same at \$25.00 and includes refreshments and lunch as well as a slate of excellent, knowledgeable speakers.

The traditional Rust Removers are facing stiff competition with more and more options for pilots to achieve bi-annual recurrency such as NavCanada's PrepAir and now Transport Canada are offering seminars.

We hope that you will attend our event in Vernon but if you can't then consider attending one of the others:

YXX	Apr 6	Abbotsford
YYJ	Apr 27	Victoria
YLW	Apr 27	Kelowna
YVK	May 4	Vernon
YKA	May 11	Kamloops (tentative)

COPA for KIDS (C4K)

Rob McDicken, C4K Event Coordinator, would like to remind everyone that the Vernon C4K is scheduled for **Saturday, July 13th. Save The Date!**

Any pilot even thinking about flying, even if you are not yet ready to commit, should consider submitting the form for the Vulnerable Sector Check (VSC) as soon as possible. This has been set by COPA National and is mandatory. Only pilots are required to have a VSC and if a secondary check, i.e. fingerprinting be required, the Flying Club will reimburse members for the cost (approx. \$25.00).

Schedule of Activities

19-Feb	Regular Meeting + Burgers & Beans
24-Feb	Pancake Breakfast
TBA	VFC /John Olsen Scholarship Presentation
19-Mar	Regular Meeting
24-Mar	Pancake Breakfast
16-Apr	Regular Meeting + BBQ + Presentation of the VFC Scholarship in Memory of Len Neufeld
28-Apr	Pancake Breakfast
3-May	Friday Evening Social
4-May	Rust Remover
21-May	Regular Meeting + BBQ
26-May	Pancake Breakfast
18-Jun	Regular Meeting + BBQ
23-Jun	Pancake Breakfast
16-Jul	Barbeque
13-Jul	COPA for KIDS (C4K)
28-Jul	Pancake Breakfast
20-Aug	Barbeque
25-Aug	Pancake Breakfast
17-Sep	Annual General Meeting

→ Fly-Out Wednesday mornings to Salmon Arm for coffee
 → Fly-Out Thursday mornings to Penticton for coffee & lunch in Oliver

Thank-you for supporting your local Flying Club! The pancake breakfasts and barbeques help to pay the costs of having a club which includes owning and maintaining the clubhouse. For example, the monthly lease payment to the City of Vernon is about \$330.00.

And a Big Thank-You to Wyatt McMurray of A&W for his continued support through his donation of burgers and buns for our barbeques!

FOR SALE – RV7A

\$110,000.00 CDN

Hangared in Pitt Meadows

0320 Fixed Pitch. 1100 tt

VFR. Dual controls Cloth seats. Built by Stan Nelson in Vernon

Contact Karen at Kjd172@hotmail.com



Voyage Across the Sky – Part Two

By Stu Simpson

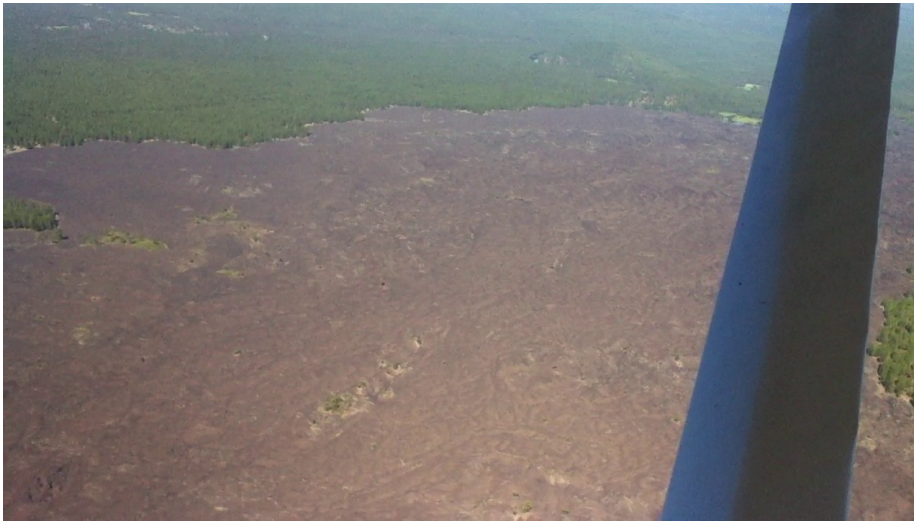
Photos by Stu Simpson and Geoff Pritchard

Day 4

This would be an easier day, I assured Geoff at breakfast, but back at the airport, I was having my doubts. It was still early and the temperature was already nearing the mid-20s. Bend sits at roughly the same elevation as Kirkby Field so density altitude was definitely on my mind.

We hadn't fuelled yet, either. We were just too knackered the previous night and decided we'd gas up this morning. I regretted that choice now watching all the other planes in line for the fuel pumps ahead of us. We'd be delayed.

An ancient lava field south of Bend, OR.



Bend has a pretty interesting airport, in terms of the variety of airplanes it features. I was really impressed to see everything from Cessna and Hawker business jets, to all manner of homebuilts, including a flex-wing trike, a Columbia 400, a Zenair 601, a Harmon Rocket and a Titan Tornado. Each of them was up and flying that morning, too.

The pilot of the Harmon Rocket said he and his wife were flying back to Everett, Washington. He reckoned it would take a little less than two hours. He offered me his business card and invited us to

call him when we got to Everett. He'd give us directions, he said, to a pair of outstanding aviation museums.

For a moment I envied the man in the Rocket and thought how easy it would be to fly around in a fast airplane like his. You'd get to where you're going in practically no time. There's power to spare and you'd rarely worry about density altitude. You might even have an autopilot to do some of the flying for you. In fact, Pritchard and I could've gotten to San Francisco in a day and a half in planes like that. Yes, it would be easy.

But then I chided myself for wanting to take the easy way. I remembered we didn't sign on to this trip hoping for it to be simple, and I felt a little ashamed for thinking it would be better if we could only go faster. I recited to myself what I've always taught my two boys when witnessing their frustration with difficult tasks: "You don't quit on something just because it's tough." I decided to stop whining to myself and get on with it. After all, we were here for the adventure. Besides, I smiled to myself; Geoff and I were going to have a hell of a lot better story to tell than the Rocket man.

Launching from Bend, the density altitude was immediately evident. The AWOS put it at 5400'. We started a slow and steady climb to match the visibly rising slope of the terrain ahead. Our next landing spot was a place called Klamath Falls, about 135 miles distant.

Each of us was worried about a repeat of yesterday's engine problems, so we decided to follow the highway below. If one of us went down, at least we'd be close to any help arriving by road. There was nowhere else to go; we were surrounded by the thick evergreen forest of a national park and virtually no development existed outside of the road boundary. Pretty good Sasquatch country, I thought.

Not long out of Bend we spotted a huge swath of blackened ground approaching. We each guessed it to be the corpse of a recent forest fire. But as we got closer, we knew the blackness belonged to something else. It was a lava field, the geological effluent from one of the many volcanoes comprising the Cascade range to the west.

What would happen to Pritchard and me, I wondered, if one of those volcanoes lit off, like Mt. St. Helens did in 1980? We might have a fifty-fifty chance if we could make it to a safe landing spot. I guess I've had worse odds.

As we flew through the morning sunshine, we worked our way steadily higher until we knew we could clear the higher terrain that the map showed in front of us. The highest point we had to hurdle was at 4800', which, because of the temperature and density altitude was more like 7500' as far as the airplanes recognized. But for some reason the thermal

fairy had forsaken us. Merl and the Champ had to fight for every foot of altitude, a battle that the occasional downdraft only made worse.

Things improved as we burned off more and more fuel, though, and every now and then, just for the hell of it, Geoff and I each pulled on our carb heat. We were slowly winning this day.

I was suddenly very taken by the story that I realized we were living. There we were, piloting a pair of tough, simple little airplanes above a stunning mountain wilderness on a true-life flying adventure. Some men's dreams are made of these moments. But, far from dreaming, we were living the whole thing right out loud. It was incredibly challenging, sometimes dangerous, and utterly unforgettable.

Who needs a Harmon Rocket? I laughed to myself.

The calm, glassy surface of Klamath Lake.



Just before lunch, Klamath's controller cleared us for a straight-in to runway 14. As I touched down I noticed an arrester cable recessed into the pavement near the end of the runway. Fighter and attack aircraft use these cables in the event of emergency landings, and I reckoned there must be a fair bit

of military air traffic at this airport.

Turns out I was right, as the next thing I noticed was a squadron of F-15 fighters at the Air National Guard base on the field.

Our fuel truck showed up shortly after we shut down, but the fuel price was \$6.20 per gallon! It was the most expensive fuel we found in the US (I can't be bothered to do the math to compare it to the astronomical price we paid in Cranbrook). Once again, the ramp was stifling hot.

We grabbed some lunch at the airport restaurant and saw quite a parade of military aircraft. A pair of Navy F/A-18s landed and taxied in while I ate my sandwich, and as Geoff was spooning soup into his mouth, six F-15s taxied to the button of the runway for takeoff. By the time we paid our bill and made it back to our planes, the Eagles were taking off in pairs and pulling nearly straight up.

I spent a few minutes before we fired up talking with a guy who flew in with his Avid Magnum. It was pretty evident he didn't often get to talk to guys like Geoff and I; the guys at the slower, simpler, more daring end of aviation. He clearly envied us our trip, our camaraderie, and our adventure. I felt terribly guilty having to put him off so we could return to the sky. I may have mentioned that Pritchard had an appointment with his proptologist.

Very soon after takeoff I knew we'd have an easier time with our altitude than we had in the morning. The thermals were many and strong, and Pritchard and I roped everyone we could find. I truly appreciated each little gift of lift as we flew on.

Mount Shasta loomed ever closer, dominating our southern horizon. It peaks at a little over 14,000' and is one of the highest mountains on the continent. We surfed our way to the glorious height of 8700' as we passed its northern slopes. I know it's ridiculous, but I was actually a bit nervous being so close to Shasta in case it suddenly erupted while we were near.

As I surveyed the lava cliffs and outcroppings below us, I realized we'd actually made it to California in our own little airplanes. I was pretty damned pleased with that.

The next town beneath us was a place called Weed. Who on earth would name a town 'Weed'? Certainly, someone out there knows the answer but I haven't found out. I'm quite content to remain ignorant because I think it's funny as hell.

An enormous cinder cone sprouts from the western slope of Mt. Shasta, south of Weed. This cone, called Black Bluff, is completely black and sits at less than half of Mt. Shasta's height. Were it anywhere else, it would be a pretty fair sized mountain. But here, it's merely a servant waiting eternally at the foot of its master.

"Stu, are you getting this downdraft that I'm getting?" Geoff asked worriedly.

"Roger that," I replied, "It's from the wind hitting the mountain and then running downhill."

"I can't maintain altitude," said Pritchard.

"Me either, but I think we'll fly out of it pretty soon."



Mount Shasta and a cinder cone called Black Bluff in northern California.

In fact, it took about 20 miles before we could actually maintain altitude or even climb a little. The downdraft never amounted to much at any one time, but it cost us 2500' that we'd worked really hard to get. Luckily, the terrain that ran southward follows roughly the same downhill slope as our descent took. It was frustrating, though, and more so because of the headwind we faced.

Geoff in the Champ over the Shasta Valley

The narrow Shasta Valley led us further along toward Redding, our next overnight stop. Shasta Lake, a huge man-made reservoir, sits at the south end of the valley. Its waters are brilliant green and contrast sharply against the bright red shoreline. Numerous boats scooted across the water trailing skiers and tubers. It looked like fun.





The stunning Shasta Lake.

Redding was hot. Actually, it was way beyond hot and had risen to the status of hellish. Surprisingly, the airport ramp was nearly empty. I wondered if we were even supposed to be there. Pritchard was clearly relieved the day had passed with no problems other than the laborious climb out of Bend.

“Hey, you guys are from Canada, right?” said a voice from behind us. “We sure are,” I responded, turning to see who was asking. “I thought so. I could tell from the registrations on your planes.” He was an older fellow who had a big smile on his face. He was pretty pleased he pegged us as Canadians. He owned a Van’s RV, he said, and he knew where Vancouver was, but not Calgary.

He saw we were sweating our faces off and said the heat was pretty normal for that time of year. “Wait right here,” he suddenly announced, “I’ll be right back!” Then he raced off in his golf cart toward a row of hangars. We set to work tying down for the night. A few moments later he returned with a cold beer for each of us! I had to refuse because I’d soon be driving our rental car, but I sure envied Geoff as he drank his down. “I haven’t been on the ground ten minutes and I’ve already got a cold beer in my hand!” Pritchard grinned. “I like California!”



Notice the palm trees in the background. We’re both pretty pleased that we’d flown our little airplanes all the way to California!

Day 5

“Tell me again why we live in Calgary, Geoff.” “I can’t remember,” he replied wistfully, staring at the morning. I couldn’t blame him.

I too stared out at what seemed to be weather perfection. The sky was clear, save for some smoke from a forest

fire burning southwest of us. The warm air breezily caressed us while we unstrapped Merl and the Champ. Palm trees lined some of the roads on the way to the airport that morning, and our driver remarked how it was a big deal that a little bit of snow fell in Redding a few years ago. How do they find the strength to go on, I wondered humorously?

Instead of pondering reasons why I should move to California, I figured it best to concentrate on my pre-flight inspection.

Pritchard and his Champ at Redding’s Benton Field on an utterly perfect morning.

We soon left Redding behind and turned our planes south into the Sacramento Valley. This was the day we’d been



waiting and working for. If all went well we'd finally make it to San Francisco.

The perfection we found on the ground followed us into the sky where a faint wisp of tailwind eased us gently along. The only ripples in the air came from our craft passing through it. This flight was mesmerizing, the stuff of aviator's dreams.

"I'm flying completely hands off, Stu," Pritchard remarked contentedly. "That's never happened before. This is absolutely surreal." I don't recall what I answered, but do know I didn't have the words to convey my satisfaction with the moment. I was speechless.



The Sacramento River meandered lazily along the valley floor casually doling out its life-giving succour for miles on either side of its banks. It seemed to be running low and I spotted some gravel bars onto which I'd have dearly loved to land Merl.

The wide bottom of the valley showed every shade of green imaginable, with most plots laid out in grid squares, and the rest crammed into every other available corner of land. I reckoned nearly every example of fruit or vegetable you could name was growing somewhere below us. If the Canadian prairie is North America's bread basket, this was certainly the produce aisle.

Geoff's view of the fertile Sacramento Valley.

Bright yellow crop dusters zipped back and forth over the produce below. We could easily pick out

the younger, more aggressive pilots just by their hard and steep turns. One guy actually banked beyond the vertical at the end of each pass. The older heads, on the other hand, made gentler, slower turns, knowing the odds stacked higher and higher against them the more they flew near the edge.

I wondered how ag pilots pick out the correct fields to spray. I figured they must use a very sophisticated GPS to get it right. It'd sure be a shame to spray a load of chemical on the wrong crop and end up creating three-headed cucumbers.

Geoff and I set down in Colusa where again the extreme heat bouncing off the runway played cruel and vicious tricks with our landings. But we were getting used to that, and after the dream-like flight that brought us there, we shrugged it off pretty quickly.

After fuelling, we escaped Colusa's staggering heat and climbed out for our last southward leg of the trip. We passed over more green fields, and towns I'd never heard of before. Places like Arbuckle, Cottonwood and Davis carried on business as usual while we sailed happily overhead. On the land where it was too hilly to plant crops, the golden grass shone as brightly as an Alberta wheat field ready for harvest.

Stu's Merlin getting closer to San Francisco.

We turned southwest near Vacaville, cut across a high ridge, and headed for Napa. I felt a tremendous surge of satisfaction and excitement as I spotted San Francisco's skyscrapers poking up through the distant fog.

Yee, ha! We actually made it!

We passed Sonoma and its wine country next. I found the airfield where we planned to be tomorrow to see all the vintage aircraft based there. But our destination now was Gness Field at the town of Novato. The airport is very close to the town, and both are a few minutes north of San Francisco.

Ten minutes later Gness Field appeared. The AWOS reported the wind as calm. According to the flight guide we were to use runway 13 in calm winds, so I began setting up for the correct approach.



"Gnoss Field traffic," I announced, "Merlin Charlie India Delta Delta November, plus one, is currently five miles east descending out of 2500' for the left-hand downwind for runway 13." "I'm at your six o'clock and a hundred yards back, Stu," Pritchard informed me. "Rog, thanks."

Turning the Merlin onto final approach at Novato, CA, just north of San Francisco.

We flew the pattern (the American name for the circuit) and as I turned final I warned Geoff to watch out for sea gulls circling at a landfill about 1/3 of a mile north of the runway. Wouldn't that be great; to die in a dump after a bird strike. I touched down with another less than pristine landing, but I didn't care. I'd just flown my own plane to San Francisco! Smiling hard, I taxied to a tie-down spot and looked out to see the Champ way too high on the approach.

"Gnoss traffic," Geoff called, "the Champ is going around for runway 13." He sounded stressed but I knew he'd nail it on the next approach. He got caught in a huge thermal over the garbage dump, which put him way too high for a safe approach and landing. As expected, he landed safely on the next try, then taxied in and shut down.

Geoff and the Champ taxi triumphantly on the ramp at Novato.



San Francisco for a quick look around.

What an epic experience for Geoff and I; we were on the Golden Gate Bridge at the edge of the Pacific Ocean on a beautiful summer evening having flown our little airplanes – a so-called "ultra-light", and a 66-year old Champ - all the way from Calgary! How could I top, or even match, something like that?

We spent an hour or so driving around and exploring the heart of the city and some of the suburbs. San Francisco is magnificently alive and just teeming with people out and about. The architecture is beautiful and classic. At some moments I thought I'd stepped into a Humphrey Bogart movie, while at other times I wondered how we found ourselves in such a ghetto. The city is extremely diverse and absolutely iconic.

That night in my hotel room I reflected on what Geoff and I had done; about having flown our planes all this way. I felt proud, and a little astonished that we'd actually made it.

Driving on the Golden Gate Bridge after having flown our planes - an ultralight and a 46-year old Aeronca - from Calgary to San Francisco!

Oh, sure, you can make all the factual and statistical arguments you like about how we'd be expected to make it if our planes were in good condition, if we had enough time, and if the weather allowed us to pass. But each of us felt an intensely personal satisfaction in being there. We'd spread our wings, conquered a bit of the sky and flown farther than we'd ever flown before. It might not be much to some, but it meant a hell of a lot to us.

Now all we had to do was get home. **To Be Continued...**



After congratulating each other for actually having flown this far, we tied our planes down and arranged for our rental car. We met the airport manager who used to teach flying in a place called Leadville, Colorado. Leadville's at 9900'. It'd be murder to get a Cessna 172 airborne from there on a hot summer day! "Yup," he recalled, "there were some days we just couldn't go."

We got our rental car and went looking for our hotel in San Rafael. It turned out to be a dump next to another dumpy hotel in a warehouse district crawling with bums and hookers. We cancelled there and found much better rooms in Novato near the airport. After some dinner we headed into



Snowflakes Fly Again

Overtop Vernon Winter Carnival Parade 2019

The Snowflakes RV Formation Flying Team from the Vernon Flying Club entertained the crowd just prior and during the Winter Carnival Parade on Saturday, February 2, 2019 with several passes of the parade route.

The seven homebuilt aircraft are all versions of RV - so named because the designer of the kits is Richard VanGrunsven of Oregon, USA, and not because they are a Recreational Vehicle. This is only the second time for the Snowflakes to have a 7 plane formation

Pilots (and in most cases, the aircraft builder) are (name/aircraft type/aircraft id):

Chuck Ross	RV4	CG-EAU
Franz Fux	RV7A	CF-UXI
Hamilton McClymont	RV-4	C-GWYR (from Salmon Arm)
John Swallow	RV7A	CF-BJV
Robert Kennett	RV6A	CG-RBK
Ron Townson	RV8	CF-IFF (from Summerland)
Stephen Swallow	RV9A	CG-LGG (with show smoke)

Normally, the "Snowflakes" have mounted three- and four-plane fly pasts; however, the day of the Winter Carnival saw seven aircraft available for the operation. It was decided that the formation would take off in pairs (except for the last one, of course) and the first four would form up in "box" or "diamond" formation while the last three would form up in "vic" formation. (No 'box' or 'slot' aircraft). Three or four minutes after departure, the three-plane joined the foursome to create a "heptathing" or seven plane formation. Altitude varied between 1,200 and 1,500 AGL over the city.



(l to r) Ron Townson, Chuck Ross, Franz Fux, John Swallow, Stephen Swallow, Rob Kennett, Hamilton McClymont

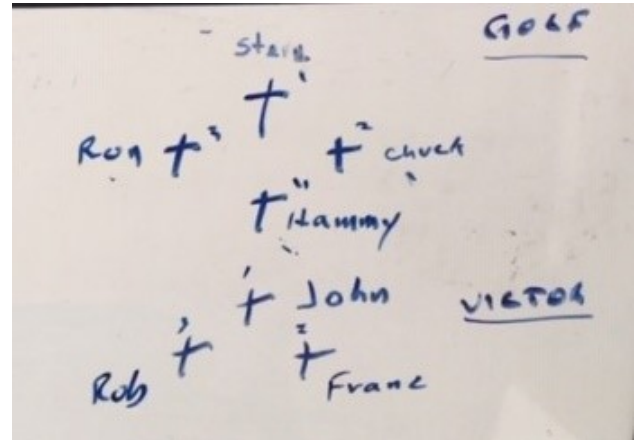
As the only aircraft with "smoke", Steve Swallow was the obvious choice for leading the foursome and ultimately, the heptathing. Brother John volunteered to lead the vic formation promising to present a stable platform on which Snowflakes 6 and 7 could fly. (The further from the lead aircraft, the more difficult it becomes to fly formation... Think "Crack the whip")

Formation flying is not without risk; however, as with driving a car, risks can be identified and mitigated. In the case of the Vernon "Snowflakes", demonstrations of this type are limited to straight and level flight with gentle turns to reposition the formation. Nothing is demanded of the pilots that has not been practiced or is beyond their capabilities. For their part, the pilots have a contract to remain within the confines of their position unless directed by the lead or permission has been requested and granted.

In an interview with John Swallow, he commented that it is important for formation flying that the aircraft be of similar characteristics and capabilities; in this instance, the aircraft are all low wing.

The inset shows the positions of each pilot once in the air and joined together. The "Golf" and "Victor" call signs were for ease of identification until join-up was effected.

John Swallow, due to his experience formation flying as a team member of Golden Centennaires aerobatic team flying CT-114 Tutor aircraft, handled the pre-flight briefing.



What do we want low flying aeroplane noises!
 When do we want them?
 Nnnneeeooooooooowwww

On the lighter side:

- ▲ A guy walks into a bar and orders a fruit punch. The bartender says “pal if you want a punch you have to stand in line.” Guy looks around, but there is no punch line
- ▲ How many opticians does it take to change a light bulb? Is it one or two? One or two?
- ▲ A blind man walks into a bar and a table and a chair...
- ▲ Why did the old man fall into the well? Because he couldn't see that well!
- ▲ This is my step ladder. I never knew my real step ladder...

**VERNON FLYING CLUB / COPA Flight 65
2018 / 2019**

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VFC Meetings are held the third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.

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