



## Vernon Flying Club

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

# HANGAR NEWS



## Flight 65

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



Doug MacKinnon hands his gavel over to Betty Lee Longstaff, 2020/2021 VFC President.

The Annual General Meeting and Election of Directors was held outside the clubhouse on September 15<sup>th</sup> and despite the smoky conditions and COVID-19 restrictions we had a better than expected turnout. A bring-your-own picnic supper was enjoyed prior to the meeting.

John Swallow ably oversaw the acclimation of the previous board members with the exception of Doug MacKinnon. After a three year stint as President, he has stepped down and Betty Lee Longstaff agreed to accept the nomination for President.

Thank-you, Everyone, for volunteering!

And, special thanks must go to **Doug MacKinnon** for all his hard work and expertise in the role of President for the last three years. Doug has already volunteered to coordinate the 2021 Rust Remover!

### 2020/2021 Board of Directors and COPA Executive:

(l-r) Stu McLean, COPA Captain; Albert Bueckert, Director; Eric Hiebert, COPA Navigator; Marion Ross, Secretary; Bill More, Treasurer; Betty Lee Longstaff, President; Alison Crerar, Director; Tom Glover, Director  
Missing: Dennis McLeod, Vice-President and Stan Owen, COPA Co-Captain





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### On The Ramp



C-ICEY - Advanced Ultralight with Rotax engine - Flight Design CT2K. The Flight Design CT series is a family of high-wing, tricycle undercarriage, two seat, ultralight and light-sport aircraft produced by Flight Design (Flightdesign Vertrieb) of Germany.



Grant Sherbeth's Navion C-FFGY  
The Ryan Navion is a single-engine, unpressurized, retractable gear, four-seat aircraft originally designed and built by North American Aviation in the 1940s



Yak 18 – Dave Crerar picked up this beauty in Texas for delivery to its new owner in Victoria



ICON A5 with a Rotax engine from Carson City, Nevada (photo by Don Usher)



C-GTJB – Malibu Mirage (Piper 46-35OP) from Fort McMurray

Don Usher welcomes Sean Walker to Vernon. Sean is flying the Piel Emeraude C-GSEW built by his Dad, Colin Walker, in 1980





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## How Not to Buy an Aircraft, Sort Of

By Geoff Pritchard, Vancouver, British Columbia, EAA 348315, VAA 719951

**July 2020** – The process of purchasing a first aircraft, as we all know, is a careful and cautious procedure that involves equal amounts of research, technical assistance, and at times, a certain amount of luck. This activity can evolve into somewhat of a preoccupation that inevitably involves friends and family members as the focus and search intensifies.

Meantime, this process might relegate your life partner to wondering if there might be a Berlitz course on Aviation as a Second Language, where she might be able to navigate a conversation with you when you begin to speak in tongues when the trigger word "airplane" enters the conversation. Perhaps your partner finds solace in the fact that there might actually be a cultural aspect to all this, as there seems to be a French language component to your current obsession, when words such as fuselage, aileron, and empennage find their way into an otherwise inscrutable conversation.

This is a tale of my successful first-time aircraft purchase that runs somewhat counter to the current wisdom of how this type of transaction should actually transpire. But first, a bit of background.

Having been completely signed on to the alternate reality of aviation since the age of 10, after witnessing a five-second flight of a small gas-powered free flight model airplane that my friend David and his father had laboured over during the winter, and which ended abruptly when the side of their house stood in the way of further sustained flight. The die, however, was now cast, and a trajectory was established that afternoon that would ultimately result in my own path to aircraft ownership.

Fast-forwarding several decades found me pretty much evolved into a young adult, having achieved the requisite benchmarks of career,

family, and the associated trappings, and although still secretly passionate about vintage aviation, my only move towards something affirming was an irregular attendance at a local homebuilder's group, collecting publications, advice, and deciphering the multitude of associated jargon.

On the advice of a newly minted pilot friend who extolled the virtues of the Aeronca Champ, I began to scour the trade papers (pre-internet days), looking at ads, documenting prices, and deciphering overhaul and airframe times, included equipment, and anything else I could glean from the printed word. Soon I mustered up the courage to phone a number of the advertisers, and armed with my newfound armchair expertise, tried not to sound as if I were asking, "How much is that doggy in the window?"

I cleverly stick handled my way through conversations concerning fabric and engine condition, and tried to reconcile the performance figures of a Champ from my reading to what I was hearing on the phone. The pursuit of a suitable Champ was now occupying a sizable area of my available gray matter, and dinnertime discussions took on the intensity of a newfound religious fervour. Although the term "eye roll" had not yet officially entered the lexicon of popular speech, I felt somewhat of a pioneer in recognizing its almost continued use in my household around this time. Even minor details such as not yet having a pilot's licence did little to deter me from my newfound crusade to track down a Champ.

Scanning my most recent addition of the local newsprint aviation trade paper a few days later, I suddenly came across the ad I was looking for: a Champ for sale, not far away, recent rebuild, and good engine times— it seemed to check all the right boxes. On contacting the



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owner, and prepared to rattle off my litany of technical questions to assure him of my in-depth experience in these matters, I was met on the phone by a seller who was on the cusp of changing his mind. A terminal case of seller's remorse had set in, and after wrestling with the angst of his several years of rebuilding the airplane, and only enjoying it for a few hours, decided to keep it. In the preceding hours prior to the call being made, however, I had briefly enjoyed full ownership of my new Aeronca Champ in my mind, the fantasy running the full range of endless hours of flying low and slow over the boundless Alberta prairie, fulfilling times in the hangar (what hangar?) becoming mechanically intimate with my life-fulfilling classic 1946 Champ, and taking friends and family for rides that were amazed at my being a pilot and owner of such a wonderful machine.

The disappointment was palpable, and my dream airplane disappeared like a snowman in spring. On the phone I manned up and replied that I knew how these things happened, which I didn't, and wished him all the best, which I did not feel at all, and hung up. Apparently my next outburst, rated later at a definite "I'm glad the kids weren't home" level, did little to assuage my "one that got away" feelings, and I incurred several sideways glances at the dinner table, as if maybe she could detect a nervous tick, or clenched teeth, indicating some new developing affliction.

Salvation, of sorts, came a few days later, in a phone call from the very fellow that days earlier had decimated my Champ dreams. He felt bad about his about-face on the airplane sale, but he had just recently heard of a Champ being included in a farm auction in Biggar, Saskatchewan, and I could perhaps give them a call to find out more information. "Okay, thanks," I replied, and rang off. A fitful sleep that evening was permeated with this latest Champ information, and combined thoughts of a possible auction bargain, stacked up against a 1,000-kilometre drive round trip to a small town

in the next province, did battle until dawn, with no apparent resolution.

I gave little thought to the whole process until early afternoon, and then thought I might phone for a few more details. Dialing the number, I was surprised to hear that I was actually talking to the auctioneer on the other end, and was told the Champ was coming up on the block in about 30 minutes. Somewhat dazed, I asked if there was someone to whom I could ask a few questions regarding the airplane, and soon, through the background din, and the crackle of an early cell phone, I was connected with a friend of the family who was selling the Champ. He had the logbook and told me it had 275 hours on the 75-hp engine and it was in pretty good shape.

Agonizing as to what to do next, I was handed back to the auctioneer, who said I could bid on the phone in about 15 minutes. I said I would call back, then hung up and stared blankly out the window. The complexities and logistics seemed overwhelmingly in favour of a definite pass, but the lure of a possible auction bargain, together with the thought of the lost Champ a week before, caused all caution to be thrown to the wind, and I phoned back the auctioneer. After the barely audible auction babble, into which I inserted rising sums of money, within a short period of minutes I apparently was the new owner of a Champ I had never seen, in a town whose location I had only a faint inkling, and now was committed to courier a cheque for \$4,500 to someone I had never met. I was slowly coming to the realization that perhaps this method of aircraft purchase, however devil-may-care in nature, had some definite shortcomings, and the momentary first blush of new ownership was now becoming tinged with a certain sobering realization of all the key elements of the transaction, all of which were somewhat troublesome, to say the least.

Taking stock Monday morning, I sent off the money, arranged a flight to Saskatoon,



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reserved a rental car, and mumbled something to my business partner concerning my absence on the Wednesday. A kaleidoscope of issues then paraded before me for the next two days, from the absent pilot's licence, to exactly where I might be keeping this airplane, and the very real and immediate concern of how said airplane would be transported to the Calgary area from Biggar. I tried weakly to place the blame squarely on being born left-handed, and hence the slightly dyslexic backward manner in which this particular plan had rolled out, but with no relief. Being completely committed to the equally complete unknown was disconcerting, but I tried to convince myself that the unknown had a certain allure.

After touching down in Saskatoon and picking up the rental car, I headed out on the hour drive



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to Biggar in the clear, crisp fall weather. Pulling into town, I passed a faded billboard which proclaimed in a large weathered font, "New York is big, but this is Biggar."

I failed to find even the least bit of levity in this proclamation, and continued on to the address given to me at the end of the auction, completely absorbed in the business at hand. I was met at the door by a somewhat morose 20-something fellow, who evidently was shouldering the burden of disposing of the assets of his recently departed father. After sorting through the somewhat alien paperwork, I signed what I believe was the transfer of ownership document, collected the logbooks, then asked as off-handedly as I could where the airplane might be located. I was told it was being stored in the old Biggar Flying Club hangar (now defunct), down past the four-way stop and beside the grain elevator.

Before I could broach the subject, the family member suggested that he knew a local fellow who would ferry the Champ to the Calgary area, and I quickly obtained the name and phone number of the pilot. Not being offered any personal accompaniment, I drove slowly through town, totally absorbed in the surreal experience of locating my new airplane, of which I knew absolutely nothing. The hangar was fairly easy to locate, as it was the only one in sight, and identified by a cockeyed sign above it that indicated the "Biggar Flying" — the word "Club" having departed the phrase and now resting in the stubble nearby. I paused for a few minutes before rolling back the door, realizing the significance of the moment, and hoping I had banked sufficient good karma in life to make this a positive experience. With great effort I pushed back the door of the hangar, and stood gazing intently at the first Aeronca Champ I had ever seen, reflecting the noon light from its all white with red trim colour scheme.



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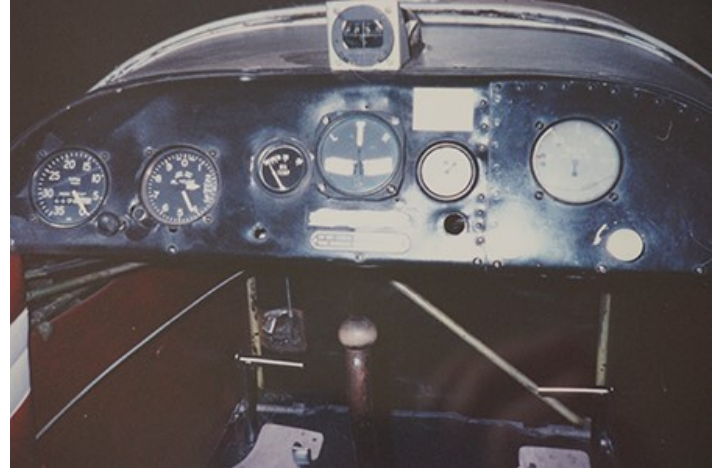
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*First sight of that Champ.*

Although somewhat faded, a quick walk around showed the fabric to be intact, the propeller to be securely fastened, the plexiglass clear and unblemished, and the tires showing only moderate wear. I debated which foot to place on the footrest, and then hauled myself up into the snug front seat, where I could scan the half-dozen instruments, gaze out of the windshield, and take in for the first time the medley of aromas that made up the universal "old airplane smell," which I would now be experiencing for decades to come.



*View from the pilot's seat — complete with "old airplane smell."*

The anxiety of discovering a possible barn wreck had abated, and although a cursory look under the cowling revealed an engine that displayed a bit more "experience" than the 275 hours that the logbooks indicated, I felt for the price paid, I had perhaps placed well in the unconventional aircraft purchase sweepstakes.

On arrival back home, I made the arrangements with the ferry pilot to have the Champ flown to a new friend's farm strip north of Calgary, and about four weeks later, my new airplane was under cover, admired, and mechanically scrutinized, with a short laundry list of required upgrades and maintenance requirements. I eventually learned to fly the following spring in the Champ, and certainly did view the endless Alberta prairie going low and slow, and accompanied often by friends and family.



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*Champ in motion.*



*Viewed from afar — planning to chase the sunset?*

Looking back over 30 years, I realize I did in fact win this roll of the dice, but could not, in all honesty, recommend purchasing an aircraft in what could be termed a somewhat cavalier and uninformed manner. Still, it makes for a good story, and launched me into an ongoing love affair with aircraft ownership that I still enjoy so many years later.



*I'll leave the reader to decide on a caption for this shot!*



*And finally, a happy cha(m)p! Low and slow over the prairies*

## MAKING HISTORY

By Barry Meek [bcflyer@hotmail.com](mailto:bcflyer@hotmail.com)

*“This was history in the making. Today I was going flying”.*

You never know when you’re making history. It happens when you do or say something that is remembered as significant by someone else. Children have the amazing ability which we all wish we had, to see, hear and understand not just the important lessons in life, but much of what we adults miss. And they remember. To a child, history is what we feed them with our words and our actions. That history is what establishes their values and their sense of what’s right and wrong. We never know until it’s too late when we’ve influenced a child, in a positive or a negative way.

A man named Dave Harrington made history in my books. Back when I was about 22 and acutely interested in flying, Dave was a pilot in the small town where I lived. I recall he had a heart as big as his physical size. He was always sincerely friendly, welcoming anyone who showed up at the little grass strip beside his house. His wife, Mary, was just as pleasant.

Dave had a plane, the make and model I don’t recall, if I even knew it at the time. It had low wings and tandem seating. Back then, I was only dreaming of flying with my own license, and before Cessna and Piper and Champ were common words in my vocabulary.

One day when I was at his strip, Dave asked me if I’d like to go for a ride. In a nanosecond, my response was “I sure would”, or something to that effect. This was history in the making! I was going flying.

Sitting behind a man of Dave’s stature didn’t allow for much forward visibility. His big shoulders completely blocked my forward view, but I didn’t care. This was something I’d dreamed of for a long time. When he asked if I’d like to go upside down, I replied “Sure”! In fact, that frightened me somewhat, but I trusted him. After all, he was a pilot and he must know what he’s doing. So I sat back and enjoyed a few quick barrel rolls.

To quote a worn out cliché, “all too soon the ride was over”. And quite frankly, I don’t remember anything else about that day. That flight was definitely a high point in my life, and history had been made!

Fast forward about 25 years. With more than a few hours of flight time in my log book and a commercial license in my wallet, the opportunity for a similar incident came up again one day. This time however, I would be a different player. Preparing our Cherokee for a flight from Boundary Bay airport, a young boy about 10 years old was standing outside the fence with his dad. They were there when I arrived and began my preflight walk-around. They inched closer to my tie-down spot and were eventually within speaking distance. It wasn’t hard to imagine the thoughts in that young fellow’s mind, as he gazed at the airplanes tied in neat rows, and paid particular attention to what I was doing.

It seemed right for me to suggest they come along for a ride. But many years had passed since my adventure with Dave. And too many things have changed in aviation, not the least of which is “liability”. Right seat insurance, airport security, rental aircraft agreements, the World Trade Center, risks of all kinds have complicated something that was once a fun, free-wheeling, wonderful pastime we enjoyed, without all the concerns of today.

To deny the young fellow the opportunity for his first flight would risk setting him up for more than just a disappointing afternoon. Historically, aviators have enjoyed a special respect from non-pilots, particularly young children. The wonder of it is that we haven’t really done anything personally to deserve that respect and admiration. It is there merely because we are pilots. Step out of a plane and you’re someone immediately held in high regard. Step out of most any other vehicle,



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and people walk right by without a second thought.

It would be a terrible disservice to all pilots, and show real disrespect to ignore people who go out on a limb and show their interest and admiration. The least a pilot can do is initiate a friendly conversation with those obviously interested in our trade. Offering an empty seat would be a full acknowledgement of their interest.

For the kid and his dad, it was their lucky day. With Dad in the back and junior in the right seat propped up on a cushion so he could reach the controls, they were absolutely

thrilled, and enjoyed every second of their adventure. As for me, the short flight brought back memories and emotions akin to what a parent feels when taking his child to see the fireworks for the first time. We experience the thrill again, just as if it were a first time for us. And we make a little more history.

Security and liability concerns are very real. But those thoughts were pushed aside for a short time on that afternoon. It's been said that rules are made to be broken. I heard it put another way once. That is "sometimes you have to do what's right".

Excited Junior Aviator at the 2018 COPA for KIDs. Rob McDicken is hopeful that COPA Flight 65 / Vernon Flying Club are able to host an event in 2021! Watch for news in the spring!

Photo by Bob Marsh



Submitted by Doug MacKinnon:

BALLAD OF A BUSH PILOT

In days gone by I used to fly  
 A Fairchild eighty-two,  
 And was it fair or stormy air  
 We'd always muddle through.  
 For hours I'd sit upon the bit  
 Of Kapok-padded seat,  
 My knees tucked in beneath my chin  
 In comfort, hard to beat!  
 The instruments, the cowlings dents,  
 The grease spots on the glass,  
 I still recall them one and all  
 As through the years I pass.

I see also in passing show,  
 The day my motor quit;  
 While taking off, it gave a cough.  
 There was no place to sit  
 But in the trees; and I said "Please  
 Don't fail me now, old chum!"  
 With groan and crack she broke her back,  
 But I just cut my thumb!  
 My head I felt, undid my belt,  
 And said, with logic true:  
 "Two motors would, if they were good,  
 Have carried us on through!"

Things happen strange and courses change,  
 And soon there came a day,  
 In Sioux Lookout, when I took out  
 A Beechcraft "Eighteen A".  
 You'll never know, nor can I show  
 The ecstasy I knew;  
 As days went by, I found that I  
 Forgot my Eighty-two!  
 I threw away my shirt so gay,  
 I shaved my face each morn,  
 In navy blue, brass buttons, too,  
 A Captain I was born!

Things happen strange and courses change,  
 As I have said before;  
 The joy for me was short, you see,  
 For that year came the war!  
 They took away my "Eighteen A",  
 My uniform so fair  
 I hung aside, and then I tried  
 To fly a Travelair!  
 I missed indeed twin-motor speed  
 That I had known so well.  
 It lured me north and I went forth  
 Beneath the Yukon spell.

"Strange things are done 'neath midnight sun"  
 'Twas said, in days gone by.  
 That still is true in forty-two  
 For malemutes now fly!  
 The Northern Lights still see queer sights;-  
 I've flown o'er Dawson's Trail,  
 (Where dog teams plied and strong men died)  
 A Condor full of mail!  
 The mountain'd marge of Lake Laberge  
 I found akin to Heaven,  
 And Whitehorse Field, is where I wheeled  
 A boeing Two Four Seven!

I've carried boats and smelly goats  
 In Junkers thirty-fours;  
 I froze my toes in Barkley Grows  
 On Great Bear's rocky shores.  
 In summer heat and winter sleet  
 I've flown them old and new;  
 With radio beams and endless streams -  
 I still just muddle through.  
 Throughout the years of sweat and tears  
 This wish has come to me -  
 Before I die - I want to fly  
 A Douglas DC-3!

Composed in Boeing CF-BVT  
 while flying down the Mackenzie  
 River, September 21, 1942  
 Captain C. R. Robinson

**CHICKEN WINGS**

BY MICHAEL AND STEFAN STRASSER



Submitted by John Swallow

September / October 2020

**BALLAD OF A BUSH PILOT** 1983 Version

I finally flew a DC3, a Lockheed Lodestar too,  
 With happy grins and close-shaved chin,  
 I thundered around the blue.  
 From Fairbanks Lands to Nassau's sands  
 We were a happy group.  
 From Ellesmere's shore to Baltimore  
 Our lives were just duck soup.  
 With oven hot and coffee pot  
 We lived like kings of yore  
 We dined on steak and chocolate cake  
 Could anyone ask for more?  
 Instead of Hogs and Injun dogs  
 Directors now we hauled  
 To Hogtown's lights on many a night  
 Whenever we were called.  
 An edit from office said "You now wear decent suits"  
 White shirts and ties and haircuts sharp, we'll civilize  
 you brutes"  
 In time the DC3 grew old as good things always do  
 A Fairchild fine now joined the line to help our jolly  
 crew.  
 Behind us lay our natty suites  
 And flesh pots of New York  
 "Twas back to flying freight again"  
 Of milk and beans and pork  
 Many a desolate barren mile

- *Composed in Anglin Lake SK*  
*by Capt. H.B. "Lefty" McLeod – retired*  
*February 4, 1983*

Now slipped beneath our darts  
 As to the arctic rigs we took  
 Big loads of grub and parts.  
 The endless gloom of Northern Lights  
 Depressed all those on board  
 We flew the brute to Resolute  
 And lonely Mokka Fjord.  
 The years went by and at the gate with GM turbines  
 four  
 There stands a Lockheed one eight eight  
 The Friendship is no more.  
 The throaty growl of Allison's replaced the screaming  
 darts  
 The only other difference was bigger loads of parts.  
 The day then came when I quit the game  
 And I could fly no more  
 With gyros toppled, shock legs bent, I sit upon the  
 shore.  
 I shoot a line, none good as mine to throngs of wide-  
 eyed sprogs  
 Of flights beyond the Northern lights and Great Bear's  
 clammy fogs.  
 The flights still grind by overhead  
 From early dawn to late  
 I loaf and think, in sunsets pink  
 Let others fly the freight.



Here's to all the Bush Pilots who  
 flew undaunted to places no  
 ordinary soul dared to go!

**HAPPY HALLOWEEN**



# One Boy's Opinion Of Pilots

The following was written by Tommy Tyler, 5th Grade, Jefferson Grade School, Beaufort, S.C. It should be of interest to all airplane drivers.)

### Why I Want To Be A Pilot

When I grow up I want to be a pilot because it's a fun job and easy to do. That's why there are so many pilots flying around these days. Pilots don't need much school, they just have to learn to read numbers so they can read instruments. I guess they should be able to read road maps too, so they can find their way if they get lost.

Pilots should be brave so they won't get scared if it's foggy and they can't see, or if a wing or a motor falls off they should stay calm so they'll know what to do. Pilots have to have good eyes to see through clouds and they can't be afraid of lightning or thunder because they are much closer to them than we are.

The salary pilots make is another thing I like. They make more money than they know what to do with. This is because most people think that plane flying is dangerous, except pilots don't because they know how easy it is.

I hope I don't get airsick because I get carsick and if I get airsick I couldn't be a pilot and then I would have to go to work.

Submitted by Rhys Perraton:

## REMINDER:

**Membership Dues are payable as of October 1<sup>st</sup>. for 2020/2021.**

Thank you to those members who have already paid (52 to date). Since the club activities have been cancelled, the only income has come from beverage sales so the influx of cash is very much appreciated. The City of Vernon expects to receive our monthly lease payments of \$358.82 and I don't think they care that we've had to stop our regular fundraising. **NEW MEMBERS WELCOME!**

## VERNON FLYING CLUB / COPA Flight 65 2020 / 2021

PRESIDENT: Betty Lee Longstaff  
 VICE PRESIDENT: Dennis McLeod  
 TREASURER: Bill More  
 SECRETARY: Marion Ross  
 DIRECTOR: Alison Crerar  
 DIRECTOR: Tom Glover  
 DIRECTOR: Albert Bueckert

COPA CAPTAIN: Stuart McLean  
 COPA Co-CAPTAIN: Stan Owen  
 COPA Navigator: Eric Hiebert



Newsletter Editor: Bill More  
 Newsletter Publisher: Marion Ross

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

**ACTIVITIES ARE ON HOLD UNTIL COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS LIFTED**

e-mail: [flyingclubvernon@gmail.com](mailto:flyingclubvernon@gmail.com)

web-site: [www.vernonflyingclub.org](http://www.vernonflyingclub.org)