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A proud history continues

THE Bendigo Flying Club was founded in 1965 but it can trace its roots back almost to the start of the 1900s.

That's when the founder, Lieutenant W.H. (Harold) Treloar, proposed forming a new club at Myers Flat, eight miles from Bendigo. Bendigo had become very aviation conscious with the appearance of balloons and gliders over the city. Powered flight demonstrations had been given from as early as 1911.

The Myers Flat Aerodrome was opened with much fanfare. Thousands of people paid a shilling to watch a display of aerobatics by two air force officers. The Bendigo Aero Club, as it was then known, was the first club to have its own officially approved aerodrome.

The club conducted flying training in an ex-World War 1 De Havilland DH-6. A flying licence cost approximately £60. In 1929 Bendigo Airways Services was inaugurated to take paying passengers. There was also great excitement when Air Commodore Kingsford Smith visited Myers Flat aerodrome in February 1932.

Despite its early promise the Great Depression took its toll on the club and the Myers Flat aerodrome closed. Instead, the North Bendigo Aerodrome was developed using 'sustenance labour' financed by government support. In 1939 the North Bendigo aerodrome site was taken over by the Department of Defence where it built the Bendigo Ordnance Factory to help in the war effort.

In 1959 a site was cleared at Huntly and pilot training resumed using two Tiger Moths and later a Cessna 172. The ongoing dispute over Bendigo's aerodrome site was resolved when the present site on the edge of the Wellsford Forest in East Bendigo was selected, which meant the Huntly strip was closed.

The present club was reformed in 1965.



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>> The aircraft is popular with the club's pilots



>> Pop in and chat to club members and instructors



The Mid-Murray Flying Club provided an instructor and a Victa Airtourer once a week. By 1969 the club had purchased and erected an army Nissan hut for a club room. With extensions built in all four directions, it still forms the core of the clubrooms today.

Later the club bought a Cherokee 140, followed by an Archer and, in 1984, an Archer 2.

The Bendigo Flying Club is now well established with a 175 strong membership of aviation enthusiasts enjoying a wide range of club activities and services.

THE CLUB TODAY

Bendigo's latest addition to its flying school fleet is a Bristell, purchased from Anderson Aviation.

The Bristell LSA is a low wing aircraft, powered by a Rotax 912ULS 100hp with a 120 litre fuel capacity.

The aircraft has already proven to be very popular with the club's pilots and many have completed the conversion to fly the plane. The aircraft is used for private hire and navigation training, with the long term aim being to extend this into ab-initio training as well.

The Bristell has already been on a journey to the Fleurieu Peninsula in South Australia. The pilot reported that it was a great plane to take on a trip because of its good cargo capacity and extra space in the wings.

Another group recently took the aircraft to Mildura and again there were some happy faces on the return.

The Bristell looks great among the club's other four aircraft, all of which are available at the club's pre-paid hire rates which saves money.

LOCATION LOCATION

The Bendigo Flying Club is situated in such a great location that no matter which way you want to head off in the morning, there are fabulous things to do and see within easy aircraft reach.

You can go from ocean views and opal mines and back in a day. There are plenty of local, large lakes to fly over, including Lake Epalock and Greens Lake. It's also just a short flight to Echuca from where you can follow the mighty Murray River in either direction and see some beautiful sights.

All the club aircraft are serviced regularly by local mechanic, Rod Shearer, just to the north east of the flying field.

The club operates seven days a week. It holds social events, prides itself in its family friendly atmosphere and is always open for anyone to pop in and have a chat to club members and instructors.

If you have ever been interested in flying, come to Bendigo, reach for the sky and learn to fly.

For more information, www.bendigoflyingclub.org.

ANTHONY GOBEL SCHOLARSHIP

THE Bendigo Flying Club has launched a scholarship to make it possible for young aviators to get a start on their careers.

The scholarship honours a former club president, whose life was cut short in 2005.

Anthony Gobel lived in Bendigo and worked in the family run business, Bendigo Aviation Services, as an instructor and charter pilot. Anthony was different from most young commercial pilots. He always placed the interests of his students, passengers and the Bendigo community before his own professional development.

Anthony Gobel was always happy, positive and the sort of person to inspire others to enjoy aviation to its fullest. It's those values the Bendigo Flying Club wants to see continue.

The Anthony Gobel Scholarship was set up in 2013 to assist young, enthusiastic people, with similar values to Anthony's, to make their dreams become reality.

The \$5,000 scholarship is sponsored by the Bendigo Bank.

The first selection process was conduct-

ed by Bendigo Club members, Will Quint, Tim Salkeld and Colin Hokin, with the shortlisted candidates interviewed by Steve Musgrove and Grant Welling.

There were six criteria - a flight test, a written exam, a test of technical knowledge, questions about their ambitions, their presentation and communication skills.

Lincoln Cottingham was the first recipient selected. Lincoln, who moved from Swan Hill to Bendigo, was a member of the Air Force Cadets in Swan Hill. He began with a Trial Introductory Flight and, since receiving the scholarship, has completed the first three hours of solo flying. He flies every Wednesday at the Bendigo Airport, weather permitting.

Lincoln is not sure yet which path he will follow, but he is grateful to the Bendigo Bank and the Bendigo Flying Club for helping him pursue his aviation career.

Any eligible people keen to start a flying career should consider applying for the next round of the Anthony Gobel Scholarship.

For more information, www.bendigoflying-club.org.



>> Anthony Gobel, and below, Lincoln Cottingham with BFC Flying Instructor Tim Salkeld. Picture: Peter Weaving

