

# BJ STORY

Lawrie Barton Johnson, learned to fly back in 2001. "That was traveling to George Town every week, watching the windssock flying horizontal and driving home again! "It took me about eight months to achieve my licence, mainly because of weather." said Lawrie. I started my flying training at Paul Calvert's strip at Sandford with Eugene Reid in a two place Chinook that I owned. Needing more experience I took the Chinook up to Georgetown to consolidate my training."

"Went onto achieving my Cross Country rating. The Radio Communications and passenger ratings were achieved in the Zodiac". Lawrie said. Putting the licence to full use straight away he and his wife, Suzie, headed off to Redcliffe in Queensland.

Some of the longer trips have been Ballarat, Eucha, Narromine and Flinders island a few times, Wagga for the centenary of flight, Maria Island even down to Melaluca.



**Zodiac lifts off from Dover**

Lawrie flies a Zenith Zodiac CH601 UL. It was built in George Town by a friend of Lawrie's, Peter Butler. It is fitted with a 80 HP 912 Rotax engine, cruises with a fuel burn between 11-13 litres per hour, cruises at 85kts, climbs 70kts and maximum speed is 92kts, stall is just 28kts. Originally it was registered in the VH category but now RA. Lawrie's machine comes with two wing kits, one designed for speed the other larger thick chorded wing for lift. He uses the lift configuration for his home field, Campania

"It is a sleek, well built aluminum aircraft. At the time I still had the Chinook, and I saw the Zodiac fly into an airshow at George Town and immediately fell in love with the look of the aircraft. As it turned out, later on, it came up for sale so I bought it." said Lawrie, "I've always been interested in flying, in fact I lived at the end of the Cambridge runway in Backhouse Lane for quite a number of years, so I saw plenty of comings and goings." Lawrie said.

"Redcliffe was an absolute adventure, we encountered Eagles, Pelicans at 5000 feet, It is just so much fun - so much fun." "When you think about where you're going and what you've got to do, there is a lot of Tiger Country out there, very un-forgiving, but you just achieve it in sections and by the afternoon you're well on the way!" smiled Lawrie



**Made it, Found it, Got the Trophy**



*The wings have plenty of lift but you lose a little bit of speed because of the drag.*



"Operating an RA aircraft for me is marginally more expensive than running the family car, fuel is a little more costly being avgas.

The maintenance, I can do most things myself, with a Level Two doing the bigger work. Oil changes, spark plugs, brakes, things like that I can do myself, which is a huge saving. It is a less expensive way of flying than GA Aviation." Lawrie said.

"It's the freedom, it has to be the freedom,, I've driven out to Campania on a morning when I was working, taken off and headed out over the river. One of the big cruise ships came in and I flew overhead and looked down to the rat race on Sandy Bay road and I thought to myself - those poor bastards having to go to work and being hassled by everyone else - and the road rage that goes on - and I'm up here looking down on it all and I'm so free." Lawrie