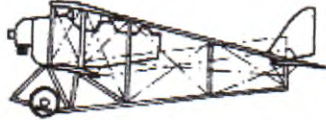


The Life of the Enigmatic Aviator Edwin Prosser



By Kevin O'Reilly



From a distant point in the future, it is difficult to portray the personality and characteristics of this talented young man. He was small of stature and weight, being 5ft 4½ inches tall (1650 cm) and of fresh complexion. He undoubtedly had mechanical and design skills having been involved in the construction and repair of aircraft and automobiles and obviously had an adventurous spirit and proved himself a very capable airman. His failing, perhaps, may have been in being impulsive and reaching too high too soon with an inability to recognise financial pitfalls. There is no evidence that he had any lasting relationships and never married. One newspaper report indicated some shyness and a reluctance to engage in public speaking, preferring others to communicate on his behalf.

Edwin Thomas Prosser was born at Wolverhampton England on 14th April 1895 to parents Alfred and Louisa Prosser (nee Garfield) who were married in 1888 in the district of Cannock, Staffordshire. Alfred, the father, was a brick and tile manufacturer at Wolverhampton and became a successful builder who passed away in 1911 at the young age of 46, leaving a substantial estate, some of which would come through to his son Edwin who was already involved in aviation.

The census of 1901 tells us that at that time, their address was Paget Road, Wolverhampton in Staffordshire with Alfred Prosser, aged 36, the head of the household and Louisa, his wife aged 32. Children were Alfred, aged 10, daughter Florence, aged 8, and Edwin, aged 6. There was one domestic servant aged 18.

In 1911 another census was taken and the given address was now "Danescroft," St Agnes Road Moseley, Worcestershire.

Most likely owing to the illness of Alfred, the father who died shortly after, both parents were absent at the time of the census. The head of the house was son Alfred, aged 20, occupation manufacturer. Daughter Florence was aged 18, and son Edwin aged 16. The address is in an affluent area and a domestic housemaid and a domestic cook were employed.

Birmingham Gazette Sep 14, 1911

Mr. Alfred Prosser, of Danescroft, Moseley, Builder, formerly of Wolverhampton, whose death occurred on June 13, has left property amounting to £8,990. Probate has been granted to Mrs. Louisa Prosser, of Danescroft, his widow, and Mr. Albert Prosser, of Molineux Street, Wolverhampton, his brother. Testator leaves £100 each to his brothers Albert and Charles, £50 each to his four sisters, an annuity of £26 to his brother Albert, an annuity of £52 to his father and mother, a house at Tettenhall to his mother, and the residue of his property he leaves upon trust for his wife and children.

In 1910 Edwin Prosser and A.M. Bonehill had joined the newly formed Birmingham Aero Club and built a successful Chanute-type glider with which they offered towed passenger flights. This glider was wrecked in a storm on 26 August 1911. Prosser later claimed he had flown a Bleriot at the age

of 16. He enlisted as a pupil of Major William Hugh Ewen at the Ewen Flying School at Hendon (London) and obtained his flying certificate (no.526) on turning 18 years of age on the 18th June 1913, flying a Caudron biplane with a 60hp Anzani engine. We then find that Prosser has purchased his own Caudron machine and flew it on many flights giving demonstrations and taking passengers and general "barnstorming," before commencing his own flying school at Hendon in 1914.



Edwin Prosser in his Caudron.

The first manned air flight at the Billesley (Birmingham) aerodrome was by Prosser in August 1913 who flew his Caudron machine to Stratford-on-Avon in 18 minutes, and recorded a height of 5,000 feet on the return journey. He would later claim the honour of being the first to fly an aeroplane across the Bristol Channel, although his claim of being the first was not confirmed by this article in *Flight* magazine.

Flight Magazine 20 Sep 1913 - Cardiff to Ilfracombe and Back.

A race was to have been run off from Cardiff to Swansea and back, a distance of 80 miles, between Mr. Edwin Prosser, of Birmingham, and Mr. Francis Glew, of Northampton, on Saturday last, but a postponement had to be made owing to rain, mist, etc. Mr. Prosser, on Monday, however, made a good flight from Cardiff to Ilfracombe and back on his machine, crossing the Bristol Channel, and steering down the Somerset and Devon coast line, whence he returned to Cardiff. Altogether he was in the air about 40 mins., and travelled 60 miles, winding up with a spiral descent from 5,000 feet.

Flight Magazine (England) 4 Oct 1913 - Mr. Prosser at Cardiff.

Two good flights were made by Mr. Edwin Prosser on his Caudron biplane at Cardiff, on Saturday. Starting from the Ely racecourse he flew over the football ground at Ninian Park and finished his flight by a good spiral volplane at the racecourse. Later in the afternoon he made a trip round the canton end of the city, his progress being watched by large crowds at every vantage point.

Amman Valley Chronicle 30 Oct 1913 - First Flight at Cwmmamman.

On Saturday 25th October the well-known aviator Edwin Prosser flew the first aeroplane to Cwmmamman. "Every vantage point was thronged with people watching the first aeroplane flying through the district and, of course, like most things, it went to Ammanford." A very large crowd gathered to see the 19 year old pilot fly his 50 horsepower Caudron bi-plane. His flying exhibition consisted of two flights, which could be seen and heard by large numbers of people in all parts of the locality when his plane circled very high in the air.



TUITION.

W. H. EWEN SCHOOL OF FLYING.

The tuition given at our School on the **CAUDRON** is undoubtedly the best that can be obtained.

The **CAUDRON** is the safest and most efficient school machine.

Our instructors can converse in FRENCH, GERMAN, SPANISH, ITALIAN.

W. H. EWEN AVIATION CO., LTD.
London Aerodrome, Hendon, N.W.

W.H.E. SCHOOL OF FLYING, Hendon and Lanark Aerodromes.

THINK OF IT!

£50 INCLUDES expert tuition on both Bleriot and Deperdussin monoplanes for R.A.C. Certificate, and insurance against breakage. This offer is open to a limited number of pupils only. Write now for particulars and agreement form to W. H. EWEN, Aerodrome, Hendon, N.W.



Ewen School of Flying where Prosser received his brevet, June 1913.

FLYING!

Mr. EDWIN PROSSER
(The Welsh Aviator), will give an
EXHIBITION FLIGHT
AT THE
ABERDARE PUBLIC PARK,
On Saturday, November 1.
FLYING FROM 3.30 P.M. TILL DUSK.

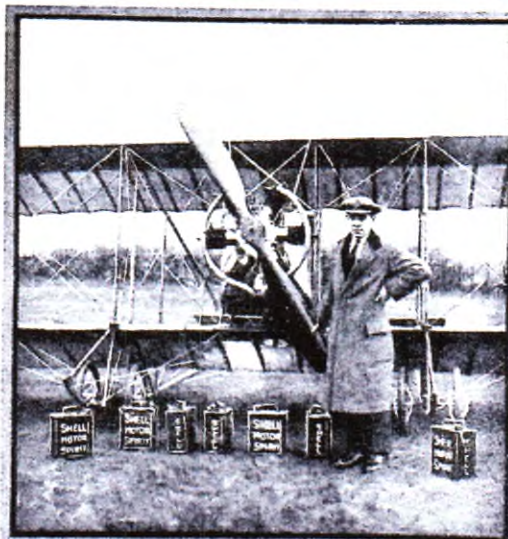
Weather permitting, Mr. Prosser will demonstrate his famous Spiral Twist.

Part of the Proceeds will go to the Senghenydd Relief Fund.

ADMISSION: 1s. (which will entitle the Public to view the Machine in the Tent) and 6d. (Field only).

Don't forget the Widows and Orphans of the Senghenydd Disaster.

Convenient Trains will run from various parts of the Valley.



EDWIN PROSSER, the British Airman, with his 80 h.p. Caudron Biplane, who on all his flights relies entirely on

‘Shell’

Left: Prosser at Brecon, in Wales.



Flight Magazine 15 Nov 1913 - Mr Prosser in a Snowstorm.

While flying through the Cwmstaff Valley on his 50 hp. Caudron biplane on the 7th inst., during a trip from Brecon to Merthyr, Mr Edwin Prosser flew into a snowstorm about 4,000 ft. up. He lost his way in the clouds, but eventually reached his destination.



Mr. Edwin Prosser

(THE BIRMINGHAM AIRMAN)

**Will give Exhibition Flights
and Carry Passengers**

**ON CASTLE BROMWICH
PLAYING GROUND.**

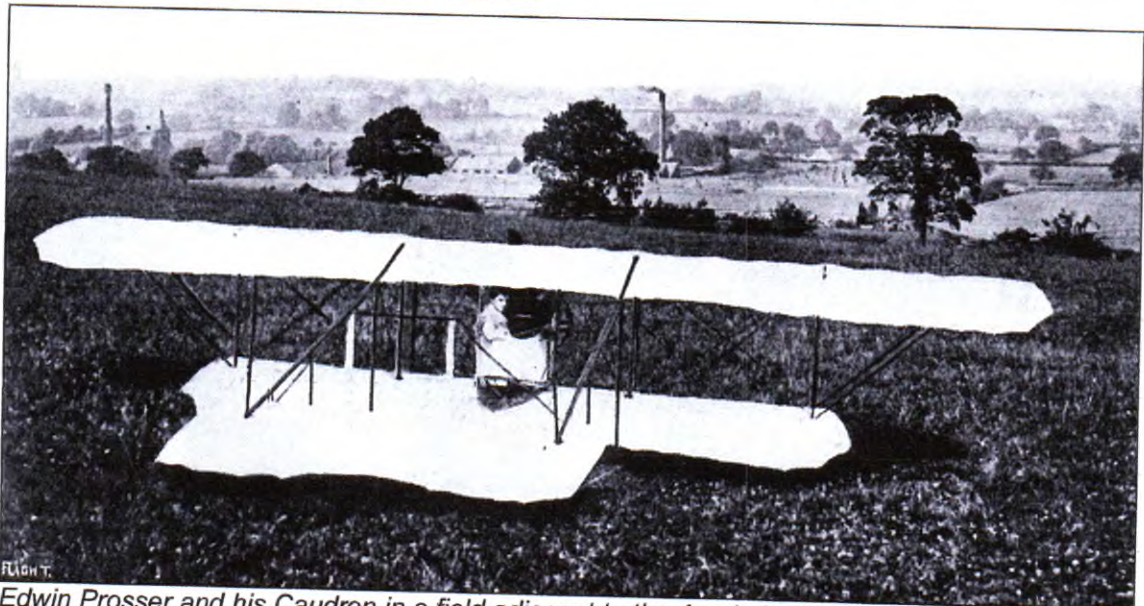
(One Minute from Castle Bromwich Station)

ON

Saturday, Sunday & Monday.

Flying Commences at 3 o'clock until dusk.

**ADMISSION:— 1s., 6d. and 3d. Motors 2s. Children
Half-price**



Edwin Prosser and his Caudron in a field adjacent to the Austin Motor Co.'s works at Northfield, Birmingham, when he required some work done to his engine, and flew there. Flight International Flight Magazine 4 April 1914 - Birmingham Aero Club.

During this week-end Messrs Trycle and Baker have completed their propeller which Mr Prosser will be trying and testing on his Caudron biplane. On several occasions Mr Prosser has started out alone from the club aerodrome. Taking the shutters of the hangar down, wheeling out the aeroplane, starting the engine and starting off have all been accomplished without a single person near at hand. The Anzani engine has now been running very beautifully, it being possible to throttle it down to less than 200 r.p.m., the propeller almost being seen as it is rotating.

Evening Despatch 6 April 1914 - **FLYING AND GOLF.**

MR PROSSER DELIVERS BALLS ON BIRMINGHAM COURSE

Mr Edwin Prosser, Birmingham's daring young aviator, had a somewhat rough time in the air on Saturday. He had entered into an arrangement with the County Chemical Company to deliver supplies of a special golf ball manufactured by the firm to various golf courses round about Birmingham, and was announced to arrive at his first calling place, the Robin Hood links, at 11 a.m. Owing to the high wind, however, he was unable to make a start from Billesley

Common until half-past eleven, reaching the Robin Hood club house at about midday. He was enthusiastically cheered by several hundred spectators upon alighting near the club house and handing the golf balls to the club's professional.

The conditions were so bad, however, when Mr Prosser again rose into the air that he decided it was impossible to continue his journey to Olton, Copt Heath, and Ladbrook Park, and returned to Billesley Common, making a safe descent.

The "Despatch" is informed that Mr Prosser will fulfil his engagement to deliver the golf balls to the remaining links at an early date - which will be announced.

Birmingham Gazette 22 Jun 1914 - MR PROSSER'S MISHAP
Biplane Damaged in Descent at Billesley

Mr Edwin Prosser, the popular Birmingham aviator, had an unfortunate mishap on his final flight at Billesley aerodrome yesterday, and damaged his machine rather badly. Shortly after 9 o'clock he left the ground for a trip round the surrounding country.

He rose to an altitude of several thousand feet, and at one stage was lost to view among the clouds. After a flight lasting several minutes he decided to come to earth, and in volplaning towards the field the spectators prevented a landing within the aerodrome. As a result he circled round again and attempted to effect a landing in the next field, which was covered with long grass.

Jumped Clear.

The skids beneath the machine caught in the long grass and served to cause it to tip up at a dangerous angle. Realising what was going to happen, Mr Prosser jumped clear of the machine before it struck the ground and fortunately escaped injury. The biplane, however, was rather badly damaged, the skids, tyres, wires and the propeller being all smashed as the result of the impact.

Mr Prosser made a number of flights in the afternoon but the tricky wind prevented him taking up passengers. He rose gracefully from the field each time and made circular flights round the surrounding country, in the course of which he gave exhibitions of sharp turning and banking.



Rush for Souvenirs

During the evening Mr Prosser made further ascents and his exhibition was watched by an interested crowd of spectators, whom he delighted on one occasion by flying only a few yards above their heads. In each he showed his customary skill in flying the machine, and by various evolutions made his flights interesting to the crowd. When flying above the aerodrome he dropped a number of souvenirs, and there was a wild rush on the part of the spectators as they dropped to the ground.

Left: A Birmingham Gazette flash photo of the upturned Caudron.

Flight Magazine 17 Jul 1914 - Mr. Prosser at Nuneaton.

Some fine flying was done by Mr. Edwin Prosser at Nuneaton on his Caudron biplane on Saturday evening. His first flight was made at half-past-eight. A second flight was made after dark, the machine being lit up by electric light, while a powerful searchlight was operated over the ground, and there was a firework display.

PROSSER SCHOOL OF FLYING.

Learn to fly with Mr. Prosser on a Caudron. We teach you on Dual Control 60 h.p. Caudron Machines, the Instructor sitting with you in the Aeroplane. Dr. Christie, after only a fortnight's tuition at our School, obtained his R.A.C. Certificate and Landing Vol Plane from 3,900 feet.

WRITE, OR CALL AND SEE US:—

PROSSER SCHOOL OF FLYING, London Aerodrome, Hendon.

Flight Magazine 16 Oct 1914 - Flying Schools.

The list of flying schools already established at Hendon has received a new addition in that opened recently by Mr E. Prosser, who has done a great deal of flying in various parts of the country, and who has lately been acting as instructor at the Caudron school, where he has put several pupils through their paces with gratifying success. Mr. Prosser's 'bus is also of the Caudron type, and is fitted with a 45 h.p. Anzani engine, which has run, Mr Prosser informs me, without a hitch ever since he first installed it in his machine. One of the great advantages of this engine is that it can be throttled down to run very slowly. Later on it is intended to add another machine to the fleet.

During 1914, Prosser commenced his own flying school at Hendon utilising his Caudron machine. This venture did not last as his school was taken over in November 1914 by an Italian gentleman by the name of Felix Ruffy who commenced to operate as the Ruffy Flying School (Late Prosser.) It would not be long until Ruffy took on a Swiss partner (Edouard Baumann) to become the well-known Ruffy-Baumann Flying School which trained many fliers for the military during the great war. This acquisition was noted in "Flight" magazine 20 November 1914.

..... I am pleased to hear that although Mr Prosser has given up his school at Hendon and sold his machine, the work will be continued by Mr F. Ruffy, whose interest in the firm only dates from the beginning of November, but who has already acquired two 'buses with which to carry on the school work. Moreover, he hopes to have another ready in the course of a short time.

Birmingham Gazette Nov 21 1914 - Mr. Prosser Sued

BIRMINGHAM AVIATOR'S BREACH OF AGREEMENT

At Redditch County Court, yesterday, before his honour Judge Ingham and a jury, The Redditch Hospital Saturday Committee were awarded £26 10s in an action against Edwin Prosser, of Wake Green Road Moseley, the well known aviator.

They claimed £40 damages for breach of an agreement to give an exhibition of flying at Redditch on 6 and 13 June. In the alternative the plaintiffs asked for the return of £26 10s paid to the defendant. Mr Ward explained that Mr Prosser agreed to give an aviation display at Redditch for the sum of £20, the amount to be paid before he started from his flying ground. It was arranged that the flight should take place on 6 June. A large crowd assembled but Mr Prosser sent a telegram saying "not flying today; weather unfit." Afterwards Mr Prosser came to Redditch on his aeroplane, but merely circled round the town.

Later it was arranged that Mr Prosser should come on the following Saturday and give an exhibition of flying, the committee paying £6 10s. Although the weather was brilliant, Mr Prosser failed to turn up.

At the time of this judgment Edwin Prosser had left England and was already in America.

- - THE - -

RUFFY SCHOOL OF FLYING HENDON

(late PROSSER).

Pupils taught on 60 h.p. Gnome
CAUDRON Dual Control Machines.

Completing the tuition and taking certificate on the 45 h.p. Anzani Machine.

Quickest and most thorough tuition.

Offices and Works:
3 & 4, Kendall's Mews, Portman Sq., W.

The question arises, why did Prosser leave England? Possibilities include financial pressures; was he escaping creditors? World War One had just broken out and he wished to avoid this? Family issues, although still single and only 19 years of age? Adventure - he may have been lured by being told Australia needed instructors and pilots.

Why travel via America? Was he enticed to come to Australia by Francis Luxbridge of Broken Hill (NSW), who was said to have aviation connections and who accompanied him on the voyage from Liverpool - New York - San Francisco to Sydney, Australia?

Leaving England

Having transferred ownership of his Hendon Flying School, the young man now embarked on a life-changing adventure at the age of 19 years. On November 11, 1914 he left Liverpool on the liner *RMS Adriatic* to disembark at New York November 19. How he reached San Francisco from New York is unknown but most likely by rail, but it is thought his apparent intended destination may have been the Panama-Pacific Exposition at San Francisco which took place between February 20, 1915 and August 31, 1915.

In later interviews Prosser stated that he had flown at the Exposition at San Francisco whilst in America but this appears unlikely as British aviation would not be represented. The Great War was now in progress and British aviation priorities lay elsewhere. He then departed America before the Exposition was officially opened, which suggests it may not have been a priority and that a business proposition by Mr. Francis Luxbridge of Australia with whom he travelled appeared more appealing.

The steamer "*Colusa*" departed San Francisco January 6, 1915, bound for Sydney and arrived February 3rd. This vessel was laden with timber from Puget Sound, Washington State, and had five paying passengers, light-heartedly referred to as "stowaways" in the ship's log. Among these passengers was listed Mr. E. Prosser, also Mr. Francis Luxbridge who would accompany Prosser to Hay (NSW) shortly after arrival.

Regrettably we will probably never know when, where or how this acquaintanceship was made, possibly through a common interest in aviation in England. It is obvious that Luxbridge was aware of the Sylvander aeroplane at Hay and may have wished Prosser to inspect and test it with a view to some business venture, the machine being a copy of the British BE2. At this time there would have been no contact with his future employer R. Graham Carey of Ballarat. The first press mention of him in Australia was in February 1915 when he appeared at Hay (NSW), with the Luxbridge brothers. One possibility is that Luxbridge may have travelled to England to take flying lessons and met Prosser there. The younger brother, Robert Luxbridge, aged 20 was born near Hay at Mossgiel (NSW), he joined the Australian Navy March 15, 1915, but to date no further information on the future of his older brother Francis is to hand.

The Riverine Grazier (Hay NSW) 19 Feb 1915

The biplane which Mr Victor B. Sylvander and his son and Mr L. Howard have been engaged constructing for the past twelve months is now about completed and may be seen fitted up in Mr Sylvander's workshop. It is at least a very high testimonial to the skill and ability of its constructors and a piece of workmanship which has earned them hearty commendation from everyone who has seen it. Some time ago a Mr Luxbridge, of Broken Hill, when passing through Hay, became aware of the work upon which Mr Sylvander was engaged, and this week he and his brother, Mr Robert Luxbridge, and Mr Edwin Prosser, have completed negotiations for the purchase of the biplane at Mr Sylvander's own price. Mr F. Luxbridge and Mr Prosser are not novices in the aviation art, having spent a considerable time in the aviation schools of England and America, although they have not handled the type of machine built by Mr Sylvander. Upon the arrival of Mr Prosser in Hay it is intended, if satisfactory arrangements can be made, to test the machine locally, after which, provided the trial is satisfactory, it will be used for exhibition purposes, and then the purchasers intend to offer their service to the Commonwealth Defence Department. Mr Luxbridge speaks very highly of the craftsmanship displayed on the machine, and anticipates a successful trial. The machine will be fitted with a 50 hp. Alvaston water-cooled aero engine, which Mr Sylvander has purchased for it.

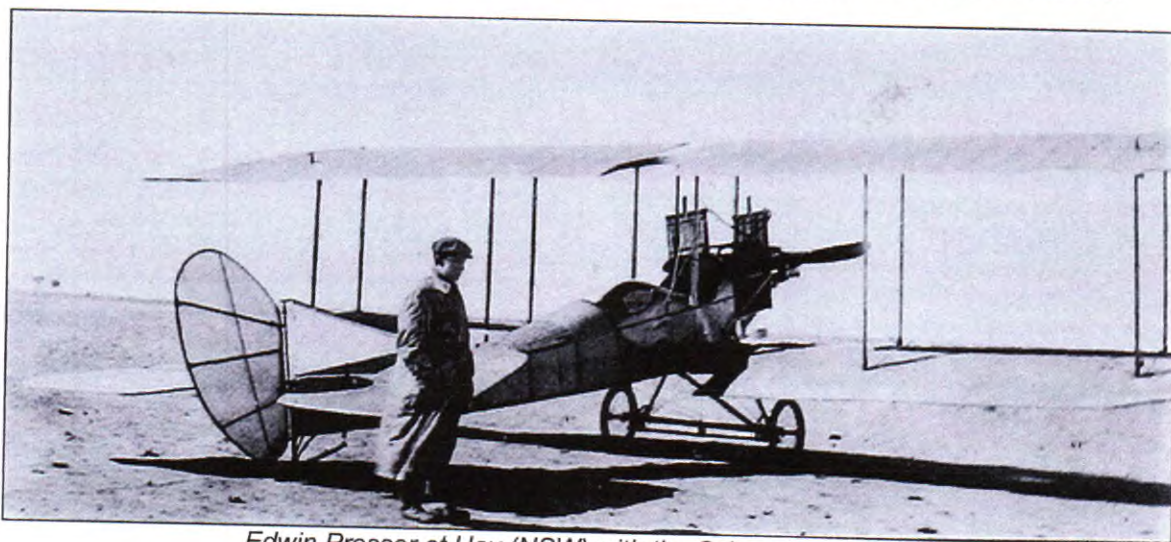
Jerilderie Herald (NSW) 26 Feb 1915

Mr. Victor B. Sylvander and his son and Mr. L. Howard (three Hay residents) have just about completed a biplane which they have been constructing for the past twelve months, and the machine is now fitted up in Mr. Sylvander's workshop at Hay.

The machine is said to be well constructed, and is to be fitted with a 50 horse power Alvaston water cooled aero engine. It is intended, if satisfactory arrangements can be made, to test the aeroplane at Hay shortly, and should the trial prove satisfactory it will be purchased at the inventors own price by Messrs. Luxbridge and Prosser, both experienced aviators, who afterwards intend to offer their services to the Federal Government.

The Riverine Grazier (Hay NSW) 14 May 1915

The aviation display, which was announced to take place at the racecourse on Wednesday afternoon, was well attended, over 18 being taken at the gate. The display, however, was disappointing. It is common knowledge that the engine which Mr. Sylvander obtained for his biplane is not powerful enough for its work, and on Wednesday the machine did not "fly" as well as it had recently done in trials. Three flights were attempted, the machine being taken to the Hay side of the track and flown towards the stand. At the first attempt the machine rose about ten feet from the ground and settled some distance beyond and to the east of the paddock. The second and third attempts were hardly as successful as the first, want of engine power being the difficulty. The biplane acted splendidly, being well balanced and prompt to answer the steering rods, and when Messrs. Sylvander and Howard have put a more powerful engine in it, we will be disappointed if it does not come up to the expectations of the builders.



Edwin Prosser at Hay (NSW) with the Sylvander machine.

Riverina Recorder (Balranald NSW) 19 May 1915 - HAY BIPLANE

Mr V. B. Sylvander, of Hay, who accomplished the feat of constructing a glider which filled all the requirements of an air vehicle of the kind, can now be placed among the first successful aeroplane builders of Australia, for his recently constructed bi-plane has answered all the trials placed upon it in a satisfactory manner. On 10th and 11th instant Mr Sylvander and his son and Howard, the builders, and Mr Geof. Browne, of the Hay Motor Works, have been putting the machine to practice with Mr. Prosser in the pilot's seat. On Monday morning the machine made a flight of about a mile at a rate of from 30 to 40 miles an hour, when it was brought to the ground by the aviator. Another successful ascent was made during the day, which was witnessed by a few spectators who had congregated at the scene, near the Seven Mile Gate. Mr Prosser has nothing but praise for the construction of the

FLYING !

The Famous Airman, Mr. EDWIN PROSSER,

Will give
Exhibitions of Flying at the Race-course,

On Wednesday, May 12,

1915, when he will demonstrate the locally constructed

SYLVANDER-HOWARD BIPLANE.

This aeroplane has been entirely constructed in Hay by its inventors, and will be the first aeroplane to fly in the vicinity of Hay.

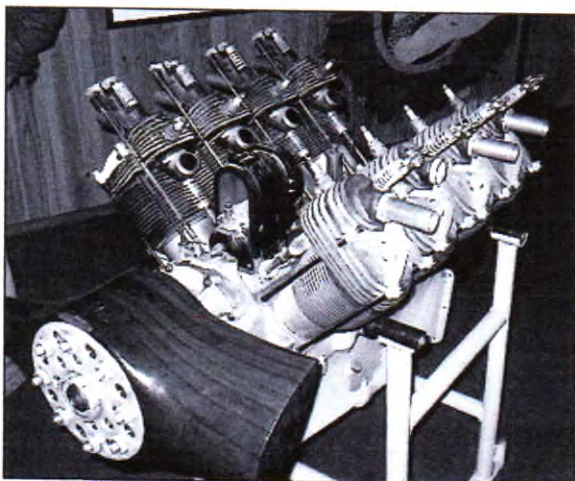
GATES OPEN 2.30.

Admission—1s and 2s; Children, half-price. Motors, 2s 6d.

Do not miss this historic event.

machine itself, but the engine with which it is at present worked is hardly powerful enough for a machine of its dimensions.

Hay can now boast, through the ingenuity and resourcefulness of Messrs Sylvander and Howard, of having carried out, as far as we were able to learn, one of the first properly constructed bi-planes in the Commonwealth, and the builders are deserving of all the kudos that has been showered upon them.



One of the three engines built in 1916 by Kelly & Lewis, copied from the Renault engine imported for the Sylvander machine. This engine is now on display at the Australian National Aviation Museum in Moorabbin, Victoria.

From these reports it suggests that there was a partnership between Luxbridge and Prosser subject to satisfactory testing of the machine. When tests proved the inadequacy of the Alvaston engine and no other suitable one to hand, Luxbridge withdrew his interest leaving Prosser at a loose end. Keith Meggs' book on Australian-Built Aircraft tells that a 90hp Renault V8 engine was privately ordered for this machine but was impressed on arrival in Australia by the Defence Dept., and used as a pattern to manufacture six of these for the Central Flying School, three by Tarrant Motors of Melbourne and three by Messrs Kelly & Lewis.

With the failure of the Sylvander venture at Hay now behind him, we question what must have passed through the mind of Edwin Prosser as to what to do with his future.

The logical thing at the time would be to offer his services to the Central Flying School at Point Cook as an instructor/pilot.

The next newspaper item we find is at Ballarat some six months after his time at Hay (NSW). This report indicates that Prosser did offer himself to the Central Flying School but his offer was not taken up for reasons unknown.

He was now building a new biplane of his own design in a large shed in Durham St. Ballarat. From the report given, this machine did in fact exist, and was well on the way to completion but the wisdom of this venture must be questioned as no suitable engine would be available and there is no reference to this machine in the future, unless it was the machine he and Hans Anderson wished to register in 1917 at Geelong (refer 1917 report). This would now appear to be another lost cause.

Ballarat Star 11 Nov 1915 - Ballarat Flying School

A young English aviator in the person of Mr. E. Prosser is now in Ballarat, with the object of starting a flying school. He has rented a large shed in Durham Street, and is building an aeroplane comprising all the best features of the leading machines. He was unable to buy a ready-made machine, owing to the demand for war purposes, and he was therefore compelled to erect his own, and his experience and capabilities render him quite equal to the task. When a representative of "The Star" called upon Mr Prosser yesterday, he found the machine in an advanced state of erection, the framework being almost completed. Mr Prosser hopes to finish his aeroplane before Christmas.

Mr Prosser, who obtained his flying certificate at Hendon in 1912, has since then given hundreds of flying exhibitions, both in England and America. Soon after he came to Australia, some five months ago, Mr Prosser offered his services to the Defence Department, in connection with aero work, but for some reason or other, they were not accepted. He then conceived the idea of commencing a school of aviation on the lines of one he had in England before the war broke out. After consulting with experts in Sydney and Melbourne, Mr Prosser chose Ballarat as the most suitable place for a flying school.

Ballarat Courier 4 Dec 1915 - Ballarat Aeroplane

After all the complaints about government preferences driving industries to Melbourne it comes as a surprise to learn that there is one which Government regulations will not allow to be carried on in the metropolis, and which is in consequence being established in Ballarat. As a defence precaution the Government will not allow flying in Melbourne or Sydney and Mr Edwin Prosser has come to Ballarat to start the first private aviation school in Australia. For the past three months he has been busy in a workshop in Durham street constructing a machine, a biplane whose framework of Tasmanian oak, on which is stretched a covering of oiled canvas, is a remarkable combination of lightness and strength. The machine will be completed in about a fortnight. The most notable point of interest about it, if there are any people sufficiently up in aeronautics to appreciate it is, Mr Prosser says, the flexible controls, which replace the customary hinged controls. He is making the whole biplane himself - except of course the engine - and hopes to give an exhibition shortly. The propeller is to be fixed behind the pilot and pupil, instead of being in front. Mr Prosser is no novice at the business. He had a school at Hendon, the great centre of aviation in England, and had considerable experience of flying in England and in America. He has already had applications from several intending pupils, and anticipates that the school will be a great success.

Evening Echo (Ballarat Vic) 4 Dec 1915

BALLARAT BIPLANE APPROACHING COMPLETION. ENGLISH AVIATOR'S ENTERPRISE. SCHOOL OF AVIATORS TO BE STARTED.

Ballarat contributed at least two aviators for service in the Empire's cause in the present crisis, namely, Capt. W. H. Treloar (who has been prisonered by the Turks), and the late Lieutenant Merz, who went under to a band of murderous Arabs. And what these worthy lads did - many more Ballarat boys are prepared to emulate - if they get the opportunity.

That opportunity may be very shortly given them by Mr. Prosser, an English aviator of repute, who has set himself up in Ballarat as a builder of biplanes and teacher of the art of aviation; and who, by the way, is making history as the first builder of a serviceable flying machine and the founder of the first school of aviation in Ballarat.

Mr Prosser, who has excellent credentials as a biplane builder, engineer, and pilot, says he is assured of about 50 pupils, among them officers of the military forces, and he is hopeful of his enterprise being rewarded by a prosperous career as a teacher of aviation.

An "Echo" representative inspected Mr Prosser's partially-built biplane at his workshop - or hangar, to use the phraseology of the aviator - and was quickly satisfied that Mr. Prosser knows his business and that it is no toy biplane that he is evolving. Ballarat has seen two aeroplanes wrecked - those driven by A. B. Stone and H. G. Hawker - so it is only a fair thing for this city to create an aeroplane in return.

Mr Prosser is introducing some new ideas into his machine, aiming at greater stability, and setting the ends of one of the stays on trestles he and a youth, aggregating in weight about 20st, stepped on to the middle of the stay, and, jolting it up and down, gave it a severe test of stability that it safely withstood. Everything bar the engine will be Ballarat built. Tasmanian oak and steel wire and oiled canvas were brought to the scene in bulk form and slowly but steadily the biplane has been evolved, and in the course of two or three weeks will be completed and ready for a trial flight, which Mr Prosser hopes to accomplish at the Miners' Racecourse, if allowed to do so. The dimensions of the machine are 30 feet across and 26 feet lengthways.

Some may ask - Why pass over a capital city to set up an aviation school in Ballarat? Mr. Prosser has a ready and effective answer. "I tried Melbourne," he says, "and was not allowed to establish a school, at least while the war is in progress, there being an objection to flights by private enterprise, only the military being permitted to soar above Melbourne's forts and harbour defences, and I have come to Ballarat to start my school because I was advised that it was the best place." Mr Prosser's biplane in the making is to be a passenger-carrying machine, of course, as he has to take his pupil aloft.

So much for Mr Prosser's present and future intentions. As to his past, it may be stated that he was born at Wolverhampton England, and that he commenced the career of an aviator when quite a youth. He quickly qualified for his aero certificate, and, apart from establishing himself as an aviator of repute, he has taught many present day well-known aviators how to aviate. Many of these are to-day flying on active service.

The Prosser School of Flying at Hendon was a well-equipped and successful institution. Mr Prosser, who came to be known as the Birmingham aviator, has made thousands of flights, according to his own testimony, and he has experienced only two mishaps, which were trifling

affairs - one like that of H. G. Hawker, at Ballarat, when his machine dipped its nose into the earth, and the other when he alighted on a green corn-field and made a bad landing, thinking he was landing on a grass paddock. Mr Prosser claims to be the first aviator to cross the Bristol Channel (Cardiff to Ilfracombe), in May, 1913.

These reports indicate that this machine was a pusher type with wing warping, possibly similar to the Caudron of which he was familiar but with a pusher configuration. Contact would now be made with Ballarat Motor Garage owner and aviation enthusiast R. Graham Carey who would be taught to fly by Prosser.

The Carey and Prosser flying years with the Bleriot 1916-17.

It is probable that the newspaper publicity resulted in contact being made between Prosser and R. Graham Carey, a local motor car dealer, and the matter then discussed regarding the acquisition of the Bleriot XI ex-Guillaux, to be sold to defray demurrage in Sydney. The Bleriot had been placed in the care of the export company Messageries Maritime in 1914 when Guillaux returned to France to play his part in WW1. Carey paid the sum of 6,800 Francs for the machine via Jean Claude Marduel and took possession of the machine in January 1916. Application was made to the Department of Defence on 1 Feb. 1916 for registration of the machine. Flights were being made from the Ballarat Common and Carey was warned about frightening the stock. If this continued he would be barred from using the Common.

By mid-February 1916 the Bleriot was being flown for publicity by Prosser. Carey commenced his flying lessons and received his flying licence at Point Cook (No.34) in November 1916.

The Ballarat Motor Garage Phone 866
Carey Motor Coy
 REFERENCE 38/1/13
 Armstrong St Ballarat, 27th January 1916

AVIATION DEPARTMENT,
 VICTORIA BARRACKS,
 ST YLLIA ROAD, MELBOURNE.

All Communications to be addressed to the Manager.

Dear Sir/
 Having just purchased a 50, H. P. GROSS
 BLERIOT monoplane, I understand it is necessary
 to register.
 Would you kindly forward the necessary papers
 or advise me where to obtain same.
 Also is it necessary to obtain permission to
 FLY it in the Ballarat District.
 If so would you give me the necessary in-
 formation where to apply.
 Thanking you,
 E. C. Carey

Referred for necessary action in accordance with
 M.O. 406/1915. Please see Letter No. 39765 dated 18th July
 1915 and letter No. 13481 dated 22nd March, 1915.
 3.2.1916. W. H. W. W. W.
 CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF.

AERIAL NAVIGATION REGULATIONS 1915.
APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION OF AN AIRCRAFT.
 PARTICULARS OF APPLICANT.

Name *Mr R. G. Carey*
 Age *41*
 Address *Armstrong Street Ballarat*
 Occupation *Manager*
 Nationality and Place of Birth *Irish born in Tamworth
 Father born in Walsley England
 Warrnambool.*

Whether in possession of a Pilot's
 Certificate
 If so, give particulars
*Yes
 Adam Prosser Pilot Cert. 526. 18. 6. 1913
 at Point Cook of Australia No. 34*

PARTICULARS OF AIRCRAFT.

Type (Biplane, Monoplane, etc.) *Monoplane*
 Make *Bleriot*
 Year when Built *1914*
 Approximate Number of Miles Machine
 has Done
about 1300 miles
 Number of Passengers who can be
 carried besides Pilot *Two besides Pilot*
*Two only on auxiliary gas. The machine has original frame
 carried 1 passenger besides Pilot
 one besides*

The letter regarding the Bleriot purchase (left) and registration application of February 1914.

The Evening Echo (Ballarat Vic) 21 Feb 1916

**MID THE CLOUDS - AEROPLANE FLIGHT IN BALLARAT.
 MR E. PROSSER ASCENDS A THOUSAND FEET. PUBLIC EXHIBITION NEXT SATURDAY.**

Mr Edwin Prosser, the English aviator, who has been settled in Ballarat for some months, rose in a double sense before breakfast this morning. He gave an early morning exhibition of

flying, and was lost in cloudland for a few minutes. Mr Prosser went up from the Miners' Racecourse, where his machine is garaged, in the presence of a number of representative Ballarat citizens.

Among these were Mayor Hoare, of the Town; Lt.-Col. Bolton, and Mr F. Herman. It was a "private" flight in order to demonstrate the capability of both the aviator and his machine, and was arranged in order to introduce Mr Prosser to Ballarat as a prospective public aviator, it being his intention to give a public exhibition at the Miners' Racecourse on Saturday next, under the management of the Carey Motor Company. Without any hitch Mr Prosser got his machine on the wing, and very soon he was mounting higher and higher until he was lost to view in the clouds. He circled several times, and was aloft about 15 or 20 minutes. He also executed the feat of "banking." Mr Prosser made an equally safe descent and was congratulated by the small knot of spectators on the success of his flight.

Mr Prosser said he rose a height of about 1000 feet. He was completely surrounded by clouds at that height, and could not even see the earth beneath. It was very cold and misty, and was not a pleasant outing in the matter of comfort. The tops of the wings were quite wet when Mr Prosser descended, proving that he was in close contact with rain clouds, as there was no misty rain at the time. The machine was then taken over by the mechanics, Messrs H. Jenkinson and G. Lane, to be carefully tended in preparation for the flight to be given on Saturday next by Mr Prosser, who says that he will "loop the loop" and execute other feats of aircraft, and he should command good patronage from the "sports" - those who pay and do not look on gratis. Mr Prosser's machine is a Bleriot monoplane, fitted with a 50-hp. Gnome engine. It was used by Guillaux, the French aviator, in his flights in Australia, and has since been renewed in important essentials, and is now said to be the finest monoplane in Australia. The Carey Motor Company has decided to establish a private flying school almost immediately. Mr. R. G. Carey, manager of the Carey Motor Company, considers that Australia should be up to date with a private flying school. We have been shown on the other side of the world how essential it is for a nation to lead with aviation, and as Australia has proved the best soldiers in the world there is no reason why they should not be the best aviators. We are in need of aviators, and the company should be given every assistance and support in their worthy enterprise. Pupils may apply for prospectus at Carey Motor Company office, Armstrong Street, Ballarat. Mr Prosser has ample evidence to prove his capabilities as an aviator. He has made hundreds of flights, including night trips, on one occasion rising 4000 feet at Birmingham.

UNDER THE PATRONAGE BALLARAT CITIZENS' COMMITTEE.

**SATURDAY NEXT,
MINERS' RACECOURSE
Part Proceeds for Soldiers' Comforts
Fund**

**FLYING, FLYING, FLYING,
And
LOOPING THE LOOP
Bomb Dropping, and an All-round
Exhibition of all the devices used in
modern warfare, by**

**EDWARD PROSSER,
The Daring Young British Aviator
Grandstand, 2/6; Ground, 1/
First Flight, 3 pm
T. HARRIS, Secretary.**

A newspaper advertisement (above) and request to fly at Ballarat (right). Bureaucracy would continue to frustrate Carey in his efforts to operate the Bleriot throughout 1916 and 1917.

Carey Motor Co.

The BALLARAT MOTOR GARAGE

Armstrong St. Ballarat, Vic. February 1916. 19

Mr. Gerald L. Jones,
Intelligence Section General Staff,
HQ. Military District, Road Quarters,
MELBOURNE.

All Communications to be addressed to the Manager.

Dear Sir,

Yours of the 10th. Feb. to hand with certificate of Registration, also conditions as to flights.

As it is my intention to open a Private Flying School almost immediately, no doubt you have numerous applications for pupils in the Aviation Corps and cannot take them, we would be pleased to have any pupils who were recommended by the Defence Department. I would be pleased to have your direction on the following matter.


We have permission to use the Ballarat Common, which is some four miles out of Ballarat, and will take particular care, that no flights are made over Ballarat.

For the purpose of assisting our Local Citizens Camp Committee, we are arranging a flight at the Miners' Race Course, which is between two and three miles from Ballarat P.O., on next Saturday, and flight would not be over Ballarat.

We would also like to have your sanction of the above at the earliest moment, as the Camp Committee are to put the matter in hand at once.

Thanking you in anticipation of an early reply,

Yours faithfully,
R. G. Carey



The Ballarat Star 28 Feb 1916

DEMONSTRATION OF FLYING. AVIATOR PROSSER'S SUCCESS. LOOPING THE LOOP

Those who failed to see the flying demonstration by the young English aviator Edwin Prosser at the Miners' racecourse on Saturday missed the best air display yet given in Ballarat. The demonstration was under the patronage of the Ballarat Citizens' Camp Committee, and 10 per cent of the proceeds are to go to the Soldiers Comforts Fund. The air display was witnessed by some thousands of people, most of whom kept outside the racecourse, and so avoided paying to see the work of the daring young aviator. All around the ground people, mounted on vehicles, looked on with interest, while the poppet-heads and mullock heaps adjacent to the course were black with spectators. It is estimated that there were about 1500 people on the ground and about three times that number outside. It was poor encouragement for Prosser, who, however, carried out the full program as it had been arranged, and it was the opinion of all who saw him in the air that his work was cleverer and cleaner than that of aviators who had flown here before him.

There was a fair breeze blowing, and as the afternoon advanced the velocity increased greatly. When Prosser made his first ascent, the machine rose from the centre of the course beautifully, and sailed away in an easterly direction against the breeze. The aeroplane, like a huge butterfly, circled, and gradually went higher, and the aviator when well over the course dropped a couple of bombs, which fell harmlessly. After flying round and round for about 15 minutes the machine was allowed by Prosser to descend, and coming in from the west directly over the grandstand it settled down majestically, almost on the spot from which it had started, the return to earth being a magnificent piece of work. When he left the aeroplane the aviator was heartily applauded by those present. He stated that he had been up to a height of about 1300 feet, and had travelled in all 20 miles in a wind blowing at a rate of about 40 miles an hour. He described the temperature at the highest point as being about the same as that prevailing below. After a short rest Prosser made another flight at about the same altitude as in his first essay, and this time the aeroplane was fired upon by several soldiers who had blank cartridges in their rifles, and a fine exhibition of manoeuvring and diving was given by the aviator, who handled his machine with remarkable skill. Another wonderfully good descent followed. Prosser's third flight was by far the most interesting, and showed how daring the young aviator really is. On this occasion the aeroplane went so far away that at times it almost disappeared from view, and it gradually ascended until a height of about 4000 feet had been reached. Then the feat of looping the loop was performed, and the spectators held their breath as the aeroplane turned completely over twice, and then settled itself again. Loud applause followed this performance. After more flying and diving the aviator looped the loop again and some seconds elapsed before the machine settled into its natural position. After this the aviator brought the aeroplane to earth, and he was heartily congratulated on the complete success of his afternoon's demonstration. Prosser seemed none the worse for his thrilling adventure, and did not seem to think that his performance was anything out of the ordinary in the art of aviation.

Postcard with Prosser and Carey, 1916.



Echuca and Moama Advertiser
(Vic) 24 Aug 1916

AN ECHUCA AIRMAN - HOW IT FEELS TO FLY.

Mr. H. C. Mark, formerly of Echuca, but now of Deniliquin, while on holiday spent two weeks at the aviation school at Bacchus Marsh with Mr. Prosser, an English pilot, and had the pleasure of several flights in a Bleriot 50-h.p. Gnome engine monoplane. The impressions gained by Mr. Mark are as follows:—

"When boarding the machine several thoughts go through your mind, you cannot help thinking what might happen if anything went wrong; you take your seat, and as the engine is speeded up you feel the rush of air very strong on the face. Immediately the machine starts it tears over the ground at express speed for about 200 yards, then suddenly the machine rises, and before you realise it you are in the air about 300 feet. The moment you look round on the surrounding country all sense of fear departs - you just sit tight and admire the country. On climbing higher your friends of the earth and all habitation appears as black spots on a green cloth. The most peculiar thing about aeroplaning is that whether you are ascending, descending, or banking a turn you are positive you are on a perfect level, and the earth is turning all kinds of angles. For instance, when banking a turn the earth appears to be standing on its edge at your side; when ascending it appears to be falling away from appears to drop, then, immediately the elevator control is moved, she ascends, giving one the feeling of being in a boat on a light swell. The higher you ascend a difference is found in breathing - a stifling feeling owing to the rarer air."

Mr. Mark was up 2000 feet for a distance of 20 miles in one flight, and 1500 feet for a similar distance. The astonishing part is the perfect security one feels, which increases as you climb higher; when volplaning to terra - firma, Mr. Mark was up 2000 feet for a distance of 20 miles in one flight, and 1500 feet for a similar distance. The astonishing part is the perfect

security one feels, only a slight jolt is felt when the engine is switched off and on, and you have the sensation that the earth is meeting you inimically. On touching earth (almost without knowing) it is your firm intention of repeating the adventure on the first opportunity."

TO BE CONCLUDED

Carey Motor Co. Phone 866.
16/208/1
3rd Military District

The BALLARAT MOTOR GARAGE

Armstrong St. Ballarat. 4th April 1916 19

Mr. Captain H. Jones,
Intelligence Sec'n General Staff,
3rd Military District, Head Quarters,
MELBOURNE.
All Communications to be addressed to the Manager.

Dear Sir,

Would you kindly let me know what you would define as the boundary of Melbourne (Prohibiting FLYING OVER.)

Also what is the nearest radius that it would be possible for me to have my FLYING GROUNDS.

Thanking You,

Awaiting your reply,
I Am,
Yours Faithfully,
H.C. Carey

Carey's letter to ascertain how close to Melbourne he could operate his flying school.

Carey Motor Co. Phone 866.
16/208/1
3rd Military District

The BALLARAT MOTOR GARAGE

Armstrong St. Ballarat, October, 4th. 1916 19

Mr. Captain H.C. Jones,
Intelligence Department,
Defence Department, Melbourne.
All Communications to be addressed to the Manager.

Dear Sir,

While thanking you for your permission to use Mr. H.V. McKay's Grounds at Sunshine for AVIATION DISPLAY, we take this opportunity of asking if there would be any objection to our using this as a permanent AVIATION GROUND under the management of a Private Company, or if not, what conditions would be required under MILITARY direction. The reason for asking is that we have enormous applications for pupils to learn AVIATION and to be convenient it must not be too far away. No doubt you will think with us that the more AVIATION that can be turned out, the better and should be of great value to the Country.

We shall be pleased to have your ideas on the subject.

Thanking you in anticipation of an early reply.

Yours faithfully,
THE CAREY MOTOR CO.
H.C. Carey

RECEIVED
-5. OCT 1916
Int. Sec. & Insp. M. A.

RECEIVED
67 THE BARRACKS
GENERAL

Carey's letter to the Defence Department, seeking permission to operate a flying school near the H.V. McKay factory at Sunshine on the outer fringe of Melbourne.



The Life of the Enigmatic Aviator Edwin Prosser

Part Two¹

By Kevin O'Reilly

During 1916 and 1917, many flights were taken around the state raising funds for the war effort and taking passengers to defray operational costs. One frustration endured by Carey was that the Defence Dept. required advance notice of flights in writing which was difficult when coping with the vagaries of the weather. At this time Prosser was still operational with Carey but in the latter part of 1917 the Bleriot was in need of parts and overhaul, and the fliers would part company. There is no evidence to show that any pilots gained their flying certificate directly from Prosser after training, it seems any permits had to be the result of testing at Point Cook by the Central Flying School. After flying at Adelaide in October 1917 and it's subsequent return to Ballarat by train in January 1918, the Bleriot would be retired to Carey's garage premises and is believed never to have flown again.

An illustration of the degree of official restrictions of the Carey flights at this time. There is no written history of instructional flights by Prosser and it can be assumed that this part of the intended business did not succeed.


16/200/1
7th. June, 1917.

- Intelligence Section. General Staff.

- Mr. R. Graham Carey,
o/c The Carey Motor Co.,
Dana Street,
BALLARAT.

This office has been informed that an unauthorised flight of an aeroplane took place on Thursday, 5th. ultimo in the vicinity of Murtos, and it is understood that you were the person who navigated the aeroplane; an explanation of your action is required in view of the War Precautions Regulations governing the flight of aeroplanes, which sets out that flights over 50 miles have to be approved by the District Commandant.

[Signature]
Lieutenant-Colonel,
Intelligence Section. General Staff.



Agents
BUICK Valve-in-head Motor Cars
MAXWELL Wonder Motor Cars
Goodyear and Dunlop Tyres.

Customer's Cars fitted by our Staff entirely at Customer's own risk. Phone 929

The Carey Motor Co.

Head Office: Mercantile Buildings, Cr. Dana and Armstrong Sts.
Garage: 209 Dana Street, Ballarat.

Aeroplane Exhibitions and Passenger Flights arranged. June, 12th. 17. 1917

Lieutenant Colonel C. Watson,
Intelligence Section,
General Staff, Victoria Barracks.

Dear Sir,

in answer to your letter, No. 16/200/1, of the 8th. Inst., in asking for an explanation in regard to my flight at Murtos in connection with the Horsham Hospital Committee, I am very much surprised at same as when registering my aeroplanes the letter giving instructions as to flights, dated, 18th. February, 1916 is set out as under, viz.,

"It is distinctly understood that no flights are to be made over fortified places, or areas which are under military guard, and unless with the special sanction of the Minister, no flights are to be made over the principal cities of this District, i.e., Melbourne, Bendigo, Ballarat and Geelong."

I have carried out these instructions strictly. Since then I have not heard or seen any regulations with regard to flights, and would be pleased if you will keep me posted up from time to time as to new regulations, which I am at all times pleased to adhere to. If a regulation was broken, it was through my not being advised of that regulation.

Trusting my explanation will be satisfactory to you.

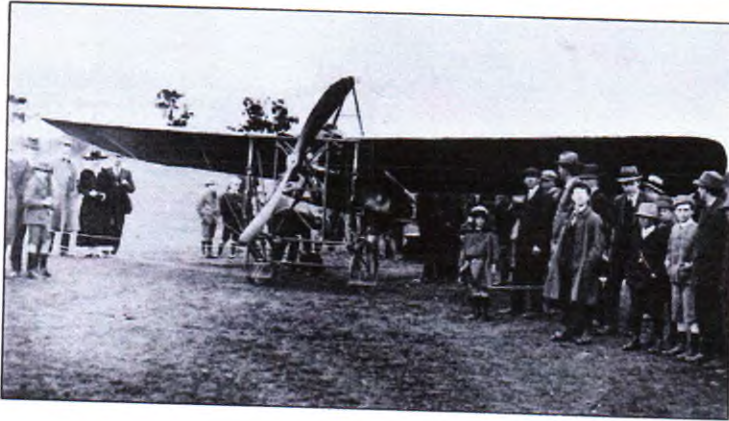
Yours faithfully,
A. G. Carey

RECEIVED
JUN 11 1917
Int. Sec'n 3 - 11 D

June 1917 an extensive tour had been undertaken by Carey and Prosser which included Horsham, Dimboola, Rainbow and Natimuk in Western Victoria and another which took in Shepparton and Mathoura (NSW). Many passengers were taken aloft sitting on the "dickie" seat behind the pilot, it

¹ For Part One, see *The '14 - '18 Journal 2023 Volume Two*.

is believed that Prosser was the pilot on these occasions as Carey was not comfortable doing this, reflecting his conservative and safety approach to flying especially as he was a bigger and heavier man. When this tour was completed it appeared that it signalled the end of Prosser's flying with Carey until he returned to Australia in 1925. A later comment from Prosser indicated that he had already made arrangements with the Flying Corps to enlist after this tour was completed.



The Bleriot at
Mathoura (NSW).

A colourful report :-

West Wimmera Mail (Natimuk Vic.) 8 Jun 1917 - Notes On The Aeroplane

Natimuk has been viewed from an aeroplane, which flew across from Dimboola. The natives thought it was the most wonderful thing they ever saw or will ever see, and they were naturally very much hurt when one of the moving population refused to even look at the plane. It might have been a sparrow for all he cared. He had been used to stepping aside to let aeroplanes lob in the street. When the local youths saw the aeroplane coming they let themselves go a treat. They didn't care whether they hadn't seen aeroplanes - racing to get the best position in front of the news agents' on the arrival of the train. No, they shouted spontaneously and without affectation, "Ah, there she comes; isn't she a bonzer?" Then the bell rang - just about the time the plane was alighting in Schmidt's paddock. It was to ring when the plane left Dimboola, and people went and put on their hats before going out to watch the approach of the bird. When they reached the street they saw everyone else running to Schmidt's paddock, and followed suit with the horrible feeling that the plane had collapsed on the way to Natimuk as it did on the way to Horsham.

When all the people in the town (except those who stayed away on principle because there was a collection in aid of the hospital) got to the plane with a very limited supply of breath left, they found it wasn't such a terrible looking thing after all. Certainly the bird was in a bad state of moult.

"He's not going to fly; he's going straight on to Horsham," That's what was being passed around, which reduced our limited supply of breath almost to a vanishing point. But Jack Sudholz worded the aviator on the way over to the town in his car for a cup of tea. Yes, the machine would fly, so the spokesman, Mr. Cross, said when the little tea party returned. he also said that Mr. Jack Sudholz would fly first, and he was pleased that he was going to fly, as he would perhaps never get so close to heaven again. Afterwards everyone else wanted to fly, but the £2 a time stopped the crush.

Any number of young people would have soared above in the inanimate bird if the fee had been say 2/6 a fly, but it wasn't. You see, there were no back seat tickets, although the only seat available was a back seat. The aviator reserved all the front seat for himself, and Carl no doubt reckons he was welcome to it. He got enough oil on him where he was, even if he did turn his coat inside out.

The Kodak girl was there, and the camera boys also, in such large numbers that one had to go about with a studied deportment and facial expression lest one might be snapped when he was looking at his worst (or at the aeroplane). Have you ever been mooning opossums? Your neck gets very tired as you run the moon along all the limbs watching for the fur, and your face in trying to relieve your neck gets a pained, villainous expression, so much so that the `possums crouch closer. It would not do if you got snapped after you had been trying for ten minutes undecided whether the lump on the limb was a lump or a `possum. Well, you get neck strain watching an aeroplane when it goes high. The aviator on Wednesday week knew that a stiff necked crowd in Natimuk was not desirable, so he kept very low. To come back to the point, some very decent photos were secured.

The Bleriot XI
at Natimuk, 8
June 1917.
Prosser at far
left in the cap.
Flyers of Time
Collection



Hans Anderson, of Danish origin, a Garage Proprietor of Myers St Geelong had long had ambitions of becoming an aviator and had taken possession of John Duigan's Avro type machine in 1916. The *Geelong Advertiser* of 22 April 1916 reported "At his engineering works, Myers St, Mr Anderson is assembling the parts of an Arrowe (sic) biplane which he purchased from a Melbourne aviator who has gone into service with the Australian Flying Corps. It is a neat and compact model with two seats in the cab, and housed in the snub-nosed front is a 40h.p. four cylinder Wright motor. Unlike Guillaux's machine, the cylinders do not rotate with the tractor blades. Mr Anderson says he intends mastering the art of flight."

This had come to nothing as he had no flying tutor and the Wright engine fitted to it proved to be under-powered, but having met Prosser, decided that he should have another attempt to enter the field of aviation. In early 1917 he and Prosser had assembled a different machine altogether.

The question arises :- Was this the machine made by Prosser at Ballarat in late 1915 and never finished for want of an engine? - Refer following report.

Myers St
Geelong
Mar 20th 1917

Dear Sir

Enclosed please find application form which we have filled in in duplicate as requested -

I should be pleased to know what permission is necessary to open a flying school, as it is our intention to take pupils in flying, for which we have assigned and built our machine -

I am
Yours Faithfully
Edwin Prosser

Edwin Prosser had written a letter to the Defence Dept. dated 20 Mar 1917 from Hans Anderson's address in Myers St Geelong enclosing application forms in duplicate for the registration of an aeroplane in their name and asking - "I should be pleased to know what permission is necessary to open a flying school, as it is our intention to take pupils in flying, for which we have assigned and built our machine."

I am, Yours Faithfully, Edwin Prosser.

The delay in obtaining a response to this application evidently was too long for Prosser and being effectively unemployed as flying for Carey had ceased and the Anderson venture failing to materialise, he then enlisted in the Australian Flying Corps at Point Cook as an Air Mechanic, and was sent to England on the troopship "Aeneas" in October 1917.

Left: The letter from Prosser to the Defence Department, dated 20 March 1917, regarding the proposed flying school at Geelong, with a machine built by he and Hans Anderson.

Letter copy: from Department of Defence - Minute Paper 9 Sep 1917

Subject: **REPORT ON THE BIPLANE REFERRED TO IN AN APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION BY MESSRS. ANDERSON & PROSSER.**

C.C. Central Flying School.

In accordance with your instructions, the machine in question was inspected by me in Geelong on Tuesday, 8th. inst.

The machine is not a reconstruction of the one referred to in a previous application from Mr. Anderson*, inspected by you, but a new machine built by Messrs. Anderson & Prosser. The engine, however, is the same.

The application states the machine has not been flown, whereas Mr. Prosser informed me he has made two successful flights of 15 minutes each at an altitude of about 500 feet. The intention is to use the machine for teaching pupils to fly. The propellers are used with chain drive,

also dual control, seats side by side. Lateral control is by warping the wings, and elevation obtained by controlling the flexible trailing edge of the tail plane.

Two structural weaknesses were pointed out by myself, i.e., the bracing to the tail to the main planes and the chain drive.

Anderson & Prosser both assured me they would attend to all details pointed out by me, and were not desirous of attempting anything but simple circuits and straights on the "Common" at Geelong.

In view of the facts that this "Common" is an excellent aerodrome, and that Prosser has shown himself capable of flying a machine, I see no objection to the registration being granted providing the machine is not allowed to be flown except over this "Common", the low power of the engine and the out-of-date design rendering this condition, in my opinion necessary.

R.F. Galloway, Lieut, A.I.S. Assistant Instructor.

The Herald (Melbourne Vic) 17 Sep 1917 - Aviator Enlists.

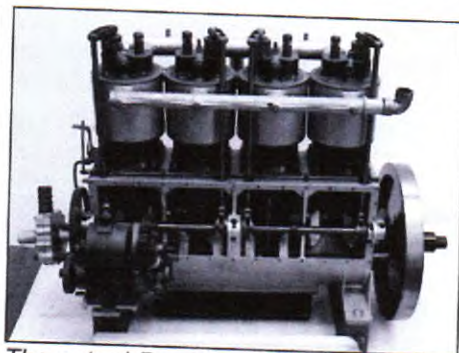
Mr Edwin Prosser, who enlisted recently, has been drafted to the Flying School at Point Cook. He holds the rank of air mechanic. He has had considerable experience in aviation. In October 1912, he joined the Flying School at Hendon, England, but as he was under 18 years of age he was unable to obtain his pilot's certificate until June 1917. Mr Prosser gave many exhibition flights in England and then went back to Hendon as instructor and pilot to the British Caudron Aeroplane company. Subsequently he went to America and flew a machine at the San Francisco Exhibition. He came to Australia under engagement to Mr R. G. Carey to operate an aeroplane, and has given numerous exhibition flights throughout Victoria. During the last two months he made about 200 passenger flights.

Some of this information was incorrect, as he was born 14 April 1895 and received his licence in June 1913 when he was 18 years of age. He claimed to have flown at San Francisco USA at the Panama-Pacific Exhibition but this is subject to confirmation but thought unlikely. The Loughhead brothers (later renamed Lockheed) were taking passengers for flights in their floatplane and he may have had this experience although he had left America prior to the Exposition official opening. Until he was building his own machine at Ballarat in 1915 there would have been no prior contact with Carey regarding his flying of the Bleriot and teaching Carey to fly.

Border Watch Mt Gambier (S.A.) 30 Oct 1917

FLIGHT OVER ADELAIDE

R.G. Carey, of the Ballarat Flying School, again flew over Adelaide and suburbs in his flying machine. On Monday and Tuesday during the flights which were watched by a big crowd, he distributed thousands of leaflets drawing attention to the Liberty Loan.



The actual Barriquand & Marre Wright engine used by Prosser and Anderson at Geelong. Now held at the Scienceworks Museum, Melbourne.

* This refers to the previous Avro based machine of John Duigan, which Anderson purchased in 1916. The engine used in this is believed to be the same Barriquand & Marre 40hp. Wright, which had been originally installed in the Wright Flyer, flown by Colin DeFries in Sydney 1909, now in the possession of Scienceworks Museum, Melbourne Victoria.

Express and Telegraph (Adelaide S.A.) 23 Jan 1918

Mr Carey's Aeroplane returns to Victoria

When the Ballarat aviator, Mr R. Graham Carey, visited Adelaide in October to give a demonstration of flying in connection with the patriotic carnival on the Adelaide Oval, aerial trips were subsequently arranged, which included the conveyance of postal matter between Adelaide and Gawler. In connection with this latter enterprise the flying machine was unfortunately damaged through coming into collision with a wire fence near Enfield. Repairs were effected by Messrs. Duncan and Fraser, and on Wednesday last the aeroplane was sent back to Ballarat. It cost nearly £10 in railway freight for each trip between Ballarat and Adelaide.

Sale of the Bleriot. The Adelaide flights were apparently the last time the Bleriot flew. After this South Australian commitment the repaired Bleriot was railed back to Ballarat and placed in storage at Carey's motor dealership. In September 1918 it was advertised for sale and believed purchased by K.J. Claffey of Deniliquin NSW. In later years it was restored and is now on display in the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney NSW.
Sydney Morning Herald (NSW) 26 Sep. 1918 (Classified Advertisement)

Aeroplane. Bleriot. Genuine 50hp. Gnome engine, used by R. Graham Carey in all his flights, will sell purely on account of his leaving for America at an early date. Phone, North 970.

Police inspection report for the Defence Department, to check the whereabouts of the Bleriot, which had not flown since October 1917 in Adelaide. In storage at Ballarat, it did not fly again.

No 200/1.

VICTORIA POLICE.—[47]

Ballarat Station Central Police District

27th May 1918

REPORT OF *John Simpson P.C. Const 4848*
Relative to *R. Graham Carey's Flying Machine*
re attached file

I have to report that I had an interview with Mr R. G. Carey today. He stated the Flying Machine is still in commission and lying in his Motor Garage Dana Street Ballarat. The Flying Machine has not been used since the end of last year in Adelaide, and does not intend to use it again for some time. And before he uses the Machine he will make application for permission to use it according to law.

at Mill Ballarat

J. Simpson
P.C. Const 4848
Ballarat
28-5-18
For information

1546
Supdt. G. Honan
Ballarat

Meils G. 3280
for J. Craft

RECEIVED
MAY 29 1918
Inl. Sec'n S.A. P.D.

R. Graham Carey - Melbourne Air Service - With the Bleriot machine out of service from October 1917, Carey was without a machine to fly for nearly two years. During 1919 he transferred his motor business to Port Melbourne and left Ballarat, however, the urge to fly and commence an aviation business was still with him. After the war, the Defence Dept. scaled down operations at Point Cook and auctioned surplus obsolete aeroplanes and accessories.

The Age (Melbourne Vic) 19 Mar 1919

Encouraging Flying - Aeroplane Sale Today

With the object very largely of encouraging flying by civilians, the Defence authorities are offering six aeroplanes for sale by public auction at the Military Flying School at Point Cook today. The machines are obsolete as far as war purposes are concerned, in that they are not suitable for training pilots to fly scout machines, but they are considered very suitable for training pilots for commercial flying. Four of the six machines to be offered for sale are Maurice Farman, a type of aeroplane easy to handle and safe to fly. In advertising these machines the military authorities claim that "on a fine afternoon they could be used with great profit by a careful pilot in giving members of the public a first experience of air travel." The sale at Point Cook to-day will commence at 11am., and intending purchasers will be given trial flights provided the weather is suitable. All the machines are well provided with spare parts to keep them going, and the sale offers a unique opportunity to enterprising individuals to branch out as civilian aviators.

The Defence authorities were very disappointed that no bids for these machines were forthcoming and the only sale made on the day was that of an Anzani 35hp. engine to a young lad. Together with a friend and businessman, Alderman Arthur Fenton, who was at the time Lord Mayor of Essendon, Carey made a successful tender for the four obsolete Maurice Farman Shorthorn machines plus spares at £400 each and arrangements made to fly them to a specially prepared aerodrome at Fishermens Bend to begin an Aviation School and air charter business. The other two DH6 machines on offer at the auction were later sold and flown to Sydney.

The four Farman machines were flown by AFC pilot Lieut. Harold Treloar in April 1919 with the assistance of other Point Cook flying cadets. No hangars were as yet available and the four machines were tied down only to be virtually wrecked when the ropes and pegs failed to withstand the ferocity of a storm. Only two of the four machines could be practically salvaged from the remains. Harold Treloar instructed Carey in the flying of the two remaining machines which continued to give service over many years and Carey was to become an institution to the Melbourne public in participating in many promotional and advertising enterprises.



On left, the four Farman machines at their new home at Carey's Fishermens-Bend aerodrome, shortly before they were badly damaged in a storm. On right, Carey's Melbourne Air Service, now with a hangar to house the two remaining complete Farman machines. Office and Flying School at top left, and Melbourne Rifle Range at rear. Hopton Collection

Carey with passengers. His machines were humorously referred to as "Mother Carey's Chickens", from the Northern Hemisphere Storm Petrels, and this machine was painted with "Who's Chicken - are you?" Hopton Collection



Prosser in England

The career of Edwin Prosser with the Australian Flying Corps in England as a humble airman was unremarkable. On arrival at Devonport (England) in late 1917, he was transferred to the sick bay and did little operational work for several months. He was admonished on two occasions for being absent without leave, was fined and confined to barracks and finally discharged from the service 15 April 1919. He undertook to take his discharge in England and returned to the home of his mother at "Craigmore" Oakfield Rd, Selly Park, Birmingham to seek his fortune in other endeavours.

The Prosser Automobile Company

While in the employ of Graham Carey and his motor car dealership at Ballarat, Australia, Prosser would have been involved in the preparation and assembly of new vehicles in the downtime from flying and would have gained considerable experience in this field which may have stimulated him to his next endeavour. On January 21 1921, Edwin Prosser now began a new career, no doubt financed by family money. He began to manufacture motor cars as the Prosser Automobile Company trading from 57 Water St, Snow Hill, Birmingham. A light 10.5 hp. car was offered as a two or four seater sedan. The "Prosser" car was described in "The Light Car & Cyclecar" magazine as a workmanlike, durable and smart little car. It was offered as either a two or four-seater and powered by a 10.5 hp Coventry-Simplex engine of four cylinders with side valves and a Cox-Atmos carburetter. The gearbox was a Wrigley unit of three speeds and the drive taken through a Hardy flexible universal joint to a spiral bevel back axle. The chassis was of channel steel and suspended on semi-elliptical springs front and rear. The pressed steel wheels were shod with Dunlop Magnum tyres with a choice of sizes. Upholstery was in "Leatherite" with a one-man hood and folding windscreen. The fascia was in mahogany with nickel fittings and handles. The standard colour being dark blue.

In future years there would be little evidence of this machine's success and it has disappeared completely from view with no known examples being in collections. The only hard evidence being a "Prosser" radiator badge held by a collector, and magazine advertisements. In 1922 he embarked on another venture into commerce, trading from the same address as the Midland Wholesale Accessory Company, an enterprise that lasted only nine months and lost £1,000. Whether or not the auto business was still operational at this time is not known.



PROSSER
Light Car, 10 h.p.
For economy in petrol consumption.
Price £295

The outstanding features of silence, smooth running and power, coupled with luxury and refinement of finish, make the Prosser famous and win praise from all who drive them.

The Four-seater.

From "The Light Car and Cyclecar," July 24th, 1922.
"In this model the spare wheel is carried on the off side. The front and back seats are commodious and comfortably upholstered."

Country Agents should write for descriptive literature and terms of Agency; in some cases it is not necessary to stock a Car.

THE PROSSER AUTOMOBILE COMPANY,
PHONE: Central 4178-4177. Water Street, BIRMINGHAM.



While endeavouring to become a successful businessman and automobile manufacturer he did maintain his aviation interest and built a 40-foot biplane glider for entry in a £1,000 gliding competition at Itford Hill in East Sussex sponsored by the *Daily Mail* newspaper. It was recorded in *Sailplane and Gliding* magazine that his was the first entry for the competition but with gale force winds on Thursday 19th October 1922, the marquee hangar in which his glider was housed was blown down causing terminal damage to the machine. The writer of this article commented on the unfortunate Prosser - "I heard of him about ten years before in the Birmingham district, where he flew a Bleriot at the age of 16."

This incident would have placed a great strain on his financial resources.

Prosser once again attempted success by commencing a perambulator making business, Bentley & Co., from the same leased address as before. Unfortunately this also failed and after a public examination 31st October 1923, he would be made bankrupt with a considerable deficiency of £4,579.

Back in Australia

Having failed at every commercial enterprise undertaken, Prosser arrived back in Melbourne, Australia, aboard the liner *Moreton Bay* 24th February 1924, not long after his bankruptcy in England, no doubt seeking employment with his old partner R. Graham Carey. There can be little doubt his return to Australia would have been to escape creditors in England and to escape the restrictions placed on him by his bankruptcy. In 1925, his engagement with Carey was now the promotion of Carey's new agency for Cubitt automobiles when flights were made at the various country agricultural shows round Victoria. The aeroplane used was the Maurice Farman Shorthorn GAUBC, the wings of which were emblazoned with the Cubitt brand. Whether or not Carey knew of Prosser's financial situation at this time is not known but most likely not.

Right: A promotional advert for Cubitt motor cars, used in conjunction with the country agricultural show flights by Prosser in 1925.

CAREY'S
CUBITT CARS
— FOR —
CUTE CUSTOMERS

The Cubitt Girls Will Fill Your Tank at

CAREY'S
478 ELIZABETH ST. Just North of Franklin St., City
PETROL PUMP
On Thursday, 30th July, Opening Day
—With—
Guaranteed **PLUME MOTOR SPIRIT**
As Used by Melbourne Air Service Aeroplanes
ABSOLUTELY NO SHANDYING
FIRST 100 PURCHASERS of 8 Gallons of PLUME MOTOR SPIRIT from this Pump WILL RECEIVE A QUART CAN of GARGOYLE MOBIL-OIL FREE, the grade to suit the car according to the Gargoyle Mobiloil Chart of Recommendation.
A CUBITT CAR will run 500 miles on 1 quart of Gargoyle Mobiloil. What will years do?
REMEMBER the opening day — Thursday next—30th July, and fill up at
CAREY'S 478 ELIZABETH ST. Just North of Franklin St., City.

The Register (Adelaide S.A.) 6 May 1925

Advertising by Aeroplane.

Mr. R. Graham Carey, who has taken up the Cubitt agency in Victoria and Tasmania, is well known through his association with the Melbourne Air Service. He has been making good use of that fact to advertise the Cubitt cars at eight country shows which he has attended by using aeroplanes to distribute advertisements. His efforts have already resulted in considerable orders being placed.

Benalla Standard (Vic) 18 Sep 1925

Aeroplane Flights :- Mr Law Prosser, of the Melbourne Air Force (sic), announces elsewhere that he will give aeroplane flights from the "Poker" paddock to-day, to-morrow, and Sunday (weather permitting). Flights may be booked at the ground or at the Commercial Hotel.—Mr. Prosser, who flies a Cubitt aeroplane, has a lengthy record. He was the first airman to fly at Shepparton eleven years ago, when he made 130 flights in three days.

Benalla Standard (Vic) 22 Sep 1925

UP IN THE AIR :- Throughout the week-end, Mr L. Prosser, with his Cubitt aeroplane, has been kept very busy in giving flights to local residents. He was able to accommodate two people at a time, and those who "went up" were very enthusiastic about the trip. On Sunday morning Mr. W. Howship made a flight, and secured many fine pictures of Benalla and district.

Prosser had given his first name as "Law" on several occasions.

Horsham Times (Vic) 29 Sep 1925

AEROPLANE FLIGHTS - Telegraphing from Rochester last night, Mr Prosser states that he will be bringing his Cubitt aeroplane to Horsham for the show and will be making passenger flights at 10/- and £1 each.

Horsham Times (Vic) 9 Oct 1925

**In the Air - FROM HORSHAM TO MURTOA.
A 15-MINUTE 'PLANE FLIGHT.**

The words of the delightful, rollicking musical comedy, "Going Up," vividly came back to the writer, a representative of "The Horsham Times," who accepted the kind invitation of Mr E. Prosser, the pilot of a Maurice Farman biplane, a British made machine, to accompany him on a business trip to Murtoa yesterday morning. The atmospheric conditions for the flight were all that could be desired. Though the atmosphere was slightly warm, it was thought advisable to take a good overcoat. Arriving in the paddock, preparations were made for the flight. The huge machine, looking like a monster albatross, was given a drink of eight gallons of spirit of the volatile kind.

The ropes were untied, and the propeller was then tried by hand revolution to get it fully primed to its big work. The pilot had a busy few moments, then a roar, and the noise of a hundred rifles seemed to break out. "Climb in the back seat" was the order. The pilot, after a careful survey to see that everything was "all clear," moved a lever and the machine gradually sped along the ground. A slight rise and the "big bird" began its flight. Oh, then a sudden intake of breath, and up, up the machine rose until the town of Horsham was passed over. The air was cold and the overcoat was buttoned tighter around one. The wind kept an accompaniment with the thunderous roar of the propeller from the eight-cylinder engine, and speech was impossible. The "sky pilot" merely waved his hand or indicated by a nod of his head certain places of interest. The map of Horsham district, from the air, presents a wonderful panorama; fields, tilled, look rich in their colouring of chocolate, emerald green and varied other colours which are artistically viewed from the air. They look like soft luxurious carpets. Horses ploughing in the field look, from a height of 2000 feet, like small brown puppies, and the earth churned up in a cloud of dust just looks like a puff of smoke from a pipe. Huge pine and gum trees are mere blue blotches, and Taylor's Lake and the Wimmera River were, just handfuls of water, so to speak. Houses, large and spacious to the pedestrian, were to the air observer just like dolls' houses, and people, hearing the deep throated song of the mammoth bird, came out just like ants to view. White small dots, rapidly moving, indicated that a flock of sheep were frightened by the mechanical "hawk", and ran across the field. The roads, the big highways for traffic appeared as long ribbons of creamy hue.

There is nothing to be afraid of in the air. Occasionally a small "pocket" was encountered, and the feeling was nothing more than a slight swell as if one were on a vessel at sea. In the air you feel as if you were stationary, but all the time the machine is travelling fast. You have faith in your pilot. Now and then he looks round to see how you are taking it and smiles. The air at the high distance is pure, cool and bracing. In wonderment you thrill at the mighty achievement of the late Sir Ross Smith and his brother Sir Keith Smith in that memorable flight from England to Australia, and recently of the Italian aviator Di Pinedo. Planing down feels like going down a lift, and your eardrums throb when you land safely on earth again. It is almost an effort to speak, for your voice sounds different and you can barely hear for a while. Still the experience of "going up!" is one worth having.

Mr. Prosser commenced flying in 1909 as a boy, helping a Frenchman with his machine during the school holidays. The Frenchman weighed 14 stone, and the aeroplane would not lift him, so Mr. Prosser got his opportunity. The machine flew with him and he gave many exhibitions. The day he was 18 he was officially granted a licence to carry passengers for hire in an aeroplane. The aerodrome was known as Hendon, then merely a field with a shed in it. It is now famous as a big aerodrome. Mr. Prosser came to Australia in 1914 to teach Mr R.G. Carey to fly, and opened his Ballarat Flying School, which was afterwards transferred to Melbourne and became the Melbourne Air Service. The machine which he now uses bears the name of the Melbourne Air Service on its rudder. He was three months in the Australian Flying Corps, but obtained three months leave to fulfil engagements contracted before he joined the force. When the contracts were completed he returned to Point Cook, and went overseas with the flying corps. He was there until the armistice, when he was demobilised in England. He founded the Birmingham Flying Club, afterwards returning to Australia.

Corowa Chronicle (NSW) 4 Nov 25

Aerial Flights. - Mr Prosser, an ex-member of the Australian Flying Corps, landed at Corowa on Tuesday, on his way to Brisbane. Whilst here carrying out an overhaul, he will be prepared to make arrangements with persons who wish to make a flight with him, on Sunday, the 8th inst. at £1 per head per trip. His plane is a Farman.

The Forbes Advocate (NSW) 24 Nov 25

Aeroplane Flights - Mr E. Prosser, who visited Forbes yesterday in his Maurice Farman aeroplane, is now prepared to take up passengers at 10/- per head. The machine is 120 horsepower, and Mr Prosser is a very capable aviator. In Wagga on Sunday he made 100 flights, thus taking 200 passengers. He will be here every day until Monday morning, Sunday included.

Whether or not with the permission of Carey, Prosser was now heading north. There would have been no advantage to Carey in advertising Cubitt cars interstate and the question must be asked - had Prosser moved on with the Farman G-AUBC against Carey's wishes or had Prosser purchased the machine but not paid for it? By this time the old Maurice Farman machines were considered antiquated and were expensive to operate. They were cold, open and exposed to the elements and lacked appeal to passengers who were now looking for more modern machines. On 24 Feb. 1926 a change of ownership was recorded on the registration of the machine with the Civil Aviation Branch but by this time it had been badly damaged at Tamworth (NSW). The wrecked machine is believed to have been retrieved and returned to Melbourne and Carey's relationship with Prosser would come to an unhappy end.

The Sydney Morning Herald (NSW) 21 Dec 1925

AIR MISHAP - PLANE DAMAGED

Tamworth Sunday:- An aeroplane, piloted by a former R.A.F. man, named Prosser, met with a mishap while making a passenger flight at Tamworth on Saturday afternoon (Dec 19).

No one was injured, but the plane was badly damaged.

The machine, with a passenger named Mattison, had risen only about 30 feet when it was observed to become unsteady. The pilot attempted to bring it to the ground, and it fell over on its side. Both wings and the land wheels were smashed, and a propeller blade broken off.

The pilot states that a sticky valve caused the engine to misfire. He noticed this as he was leaving the ground, and attempted to land. As he touched the ground the left wheel refused to revolve, throwing the plane on to the left wing.

The incident at Tamworth must have been shattering for Prosser. He was far from materials to repair the machine, had no income and was a bankrupt. The necessary ground crew would have departed as any income dried up. He would have been alone and friendless. This no doubt contributed to his unhappy situation in future years. The next known report of his activities was some 10 months later to do with his latest flying invention at Rockhampton (Qld), with a totally impractical machine.

Carey - Melbourne Air Service

Whether or not R. Graham Carey was making an effort at this time to leave the flying industry is not known but an entry in the *Melbourne Herald* of 1 Mar 1926 reads:-

The firm of J.P. Crichton and Son announces that on behalf of Melbourne Air Services, three aeroplanes will be offered for auction at the Port Melbourne aerodrome at 11am. on Thursday. The machines are airworthy, and if they desire it purchasers will be given flying instructions. In addition to the planes, the following "lots" will be sold under the hammer:- Aero engines, six motor cars, three trailers, several motor cycles and motor car bodies, engineering tools and a wide range of motoring accessories.

It appears this auction did not have a good outcome for Carey as he continued with flying but it should be noted that the Farman G-AUBC was recorded as sold to Edwin Prosser 24 Mar 1926. It was never re-registered.

Had it been recovered and repaired after the accident at Tamworth NSW the previous December?

In July 1926, Prosser notified the Civil Aviation Board that he was building a light aircraft at Rockhampton (Qld). It was inspected by Inspector T.E. Johnson 6 Sep 1926. He reported that Prosser had no fixed design and it was highly unorthodox. It was powered by an Indian motorcycle engine which might lift it from the ground but no height could be achieved. If successful he would tour Queensland lecturing on aviation and selling these machines. Johnson made several recommendations which were not taken up by Prosser. In the end, he scrapped the project and

indicated he would buy an ex-RAF SE5a from England. This was strongly inadvisable as stated by the C.A.B. on the grounds of cost and operational issues. Johnson reported to the Controller of Civil Aviation in August 1926 and again in January 1927 that the light monoplane which Mr E. Prosser was building for the "purpose of flying all over Queensland" ... "and selling thousands of them" was: "*weird looking and brings one back to the 1903 designs. ... I would suggest that, in view of the departure from the use of specified aircraft materials and the inferior workmanship and unorthodox methods of construction throughout, he be advised that any flight carried out will be at his own risk.*"

In May 1927 the Civil Aviation Board advised Prosser that under no circumstances would they grant permission to fly the machine.

The Capricornian (Rockhampton Qld) 16 Oct 1926

LOCALLY BUILT. - FIRST AEROPLANE. ✕

For some time past Mr. E. Prosser, of Rockhampton, has been engaged in building the first aeroplane that has been constructed in this city.

It is a light aeroplane, or, to use his own words, it is a machine of slow speed and of big volume, with a down draught propeller, and according to his own design. He has had experience as a flier both in England and Australia and has repaired many damaged planes. The aeroplane will be driven by a 7 h.p. two-cylinder motor cycle engine, and will be capable of travelling 40 miles an hour. The propeller is made of three pieces of wood, flat on the under side, with a pronounced camber the top side. The wings will be exceedingly thick and flat on the under-side, the entering edge of the wing being blunt and the trailing edge sharp.

... The body of the machine is wide at the rear so as to intensify its tail section. The whole of the tail construction is of unusual design. In this machine the pilot's seat will be much higher, 2 ft. in fact, than in the ordinary machine.

Mr. Prosser was an aviator at 15, one of the youngest in the world at the time. An Englishman by birth, he gained his first experience at Hendon, England, in 1910, making his first flight in a machine of the same class in which Bleriot crossed the Channel. The machine was equipped with a three-cylinder engine and was somewhat similar, in design to the one he is now building. Subsequently Mr. Prosser became chief pilot for a British company.

In 1914 Mr. Prosser came to Australia and was attached to the Ballarat School of Flying for 12 months. Then he joined the A.I.F. flying corps, leaving with the Seventh Squadron. When in England, he was attached to a training depot. About three and a-half years ago he returned to Australia and was associated with the Melbourne Air Service.

Hearing of Queensland in general and as a country so good for flying, Mr. Prosser came to Rockhampton, where he is now established. Mr. Prosser expects to complete his aeroplane in about six weeks time, when a private test will be made somewhere in the Rockhampton district.

'The best way for a man to learn to fly, Mr. Prosser says, "is to teach himself."

The final press report mentioning Edwin Prosser in Australia is a sad one, years of frustration and failure had taken a toll of his mind and he apparently wandered the countryside until arrested and taken before a court at Murwillumbah (NSW), many miles from his previous aviation project at Rockhampton (Qld). Who knows the tribulations he endured until he was taken into care.

Tweed Daily Murwillumbah (NSW) 1 Sep 1928

DEEMED TO BE INSANE

Edwin Thomas Prosser, 32, was charged yesterday in the Murwillumbah Police Court, before Mr. F. Burke, J.P., with being a person deemed to be insane, found wandering at large. On the application of the police, the defendant was remanded for eight days for medical observation.

It appears Prosser was admitted to an institution in Australia where he remained until 19 October 1929, when he was taken aboard the liner "Hobson's Bay" of the Aberdeen and Commonwealth line, by an older brother aged 38, listed as Alfred Prosser, a farmer from Cardiganshire in Wales, who had come to take him home at only 33 years of age, to spend the rest of his days in a mental institution in England.

He passed away 16 June 1966 at St Andrews Hospital, Northampton, a private mental institution.