



# AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW) Inc.

file 2001-1 AHS (NSW) Inc  
ABN: 83 295 759 224  
PO Box K346 Haymarket NSW 1238

## **Southern Skies**

The Newsletter of NSW Branch  
**February 2001 No.338**

### **February Meeting**

Wednesday 7 February 2001, 7.45pm at the Powerhouse Museum. Enter from the Macarthur Street end and the meeting room is in the new area near the entrance. Visitors are most welcome and need not be accompanied by a member.

The theme of this meeting will be the DC3 in Australia, and in addition, "Buy, Sell and Swap" will be available.

The 17<sup>th</sup> December 2000 was the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first flight of the venerable DC3. It is perhaps a cliché to say that the DC3 in its civil and military guises has played one of the most vital roles in the development of air transport throughout the world. Certainly, there can be no denial that the aircraft was indeed the backbone of most major and many other airline fleets in Australia and Papua New Guinea, as well as the defence forces. In airline service it has been operated by companies including Ansett and its subsequent group of affiliates, Australian National Airways, Bush Pilots Airways, Butler Air Transport, East West Airlines, Guinea Airways, MacRobertson Miller Airlines, Qantas, Trans Australia Airlines, and many other civil operators. It was also used for carrying cargo, aerial survey, calibration, research and general charter, and of course in various roles the RAAF and the RAN operated the C47.

On 10 December 2000, an event commemorating the anniversary of its first flight was held at Bankstown Airport, although the day was not as well patronised as hoped. However, here is the opportunity to relive the glorious days of the DC3; bring your DC3 memorabilia, slides, videos or books for another enjoyable evening.

### **December Meeting**

The December meeting was held at the Australian Aviation Museum, Bankstown, where members and visitors inspected museum exhibits and patronised the gift shop. Several sets of slides were shown, with Ian Debenham providing an interesting selection made available by the Australian Aviation Museum and featuring many aircraft from the Moorabbin Air Museum. David Eyre's slides featured a fly-in by vintage aircraft at a rural NSW property as well as some of the participants at the Aviex 2000 exhibition. Allen Clarke showed some great shots from Europe including some rather exotic types that would generate much interest in the Annual Aircraft Recognition competition. Warwick Bigsworth displayed some shots of the many aircraft that visited during the Olympic period.

### **On the Internet**

In line with our DC3 theme for the February meeting, web surfers can browse through hours of DC3 information at The DC3 Hangar ([www.simflight.com/dc3/](http://www.simflight.com/dc3/)) or the DC3 Aviation Museum ([www.centercomp.com/dc3/](http://www.centercomp.com/dc3/)) and of course at part of Ron Cuskelly's web-site which includes a detailed history of VH-ANR ([www.adastron.com/dc3/vh-anr.htm](http://www.adastron.com/dc3/vh-anr.htm)).

Airnews Queensland ([www.uq.net.au/%7ezzdbruni/airnewshome.html](http://www.uq.net.au/%7ezzdbruni/airnewshome.html)) appears to be an enthusiast's site, but includes some interesting information on aircraft operated by Trans Australia Airlines. There are quite a few other pages including material relating to contemporary Queensland aviation news.

Whilst our Society relates to Australian aviation history, many readers will also find that Air-Britain is a valuable source of information. Its web-site ([www.air-britain.com](http://www.air-britain.com)) details membership information and describes the News, Digest, Aeromilitaria and Archive publications available. These publications, as well as its other books, regularly feature Australian material.

If you are interested in Air Traffic Control, there is a lot of information relating to the Australian system available through the Airservices Australia web-site ([www.airservices.gov.au](http://www.airservices.gov.au)), or if you want to find out about the USA or UK systems, The IFR Room ([www.theifroom.btinternet.co.uk](http://www.theifroom.btinternet.co.uk)) or you can get live audio feeds and webcam at ([www.futurastudios.com/atc/](http://www.futurastudios.com/atc/)).

Warbird buffs will enjoy Panama Jack's Vintage Aircraft Co. site ([www.panamajacks.com.au/](http://www.panamajacks.com.au/)). Based in Perth, the company claims to be Australia's premier warbird restoration experts. No doubt there are several east coast organisations willing to challenge that. Hunter Flight ([www.hunterflight.com](http://www.hunterflight.com)) is following the restoration of Hawker Hunter VH-RHO which is being undertaken in Queensland.

Our closely affiliated Melbourne based Society, The Aviation Historical Society of Australia Inc now has a website ([www.ctie.monash.edu.au/hargrave/AHSA.html](http://www.ctie.monash.edu.au/hargrave/AHSA.html)).

### **For the Bookshelf: Great Opportunity**

Bruce Winley is offering the remaining copies of his excellent book, Aussie Moths for the unbelievable price of \$20 each plus \$7 postage and packing. Bruce has meticulously researched the history of de Havilland DH-60 Moths which carried Australian registration markings and operated in Australia and its mandated territories. The book is A4 size, contains over 280 pages and 172 photographs.

Bruce can be contacted at;  
217/37 Mulgoa Road, Penrith NSW 2750,  
phone (02) 4721 0676.

### **Calendar of Events**

13 – 18 February 2001 Australian International Airshow  
2001 Avalon Airport Vic. Trade days 13 –16 February,  
Public Days 16 (night only) and 17/18 February.  
7 March 2001 AHSA (NSW) Annual General Meeting,  
Powerhouse Museum  
10-11 March 2001 OZKOSH Downunder, Mordialloc  
Victoria  
11 March – 7 April 2001 London to Sydney Centenary Air  
Race 2001  
July 2001 Official opening Australian Aviation Museum  
Bankstown (exact date to be advised)  
6 – 8 October 2001 Warbirds over Scone. Saturday 6<sup>th</sup>  
practice day and muster; Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> air show; Monday  
8<sup>th</sup> recovery and departure.

### **Notices**

A Committee meeting will be held immediately prior to  
the February meeting, commencing at 6.30pm sharp.

### **Membership Renewal**

Membership renewal is now due. Your membership  
renewal form is enclosed and the annual fee remains at a  
very reasonable \$25.

### **Topics**

If there are topics of particular interest to you or that you  
think others may be interested in please let us know or  
simply jot it down and, post to PO Box 777 Camden NSW  
2570,  
Email to [garlandk@ideal.net.au](mailto:garlandk@ideal.net.au) or fax to 02 4655 3383

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or its committee.*

### **NEWS:**

**Warwick Bigsworth**  
**Ken Garland**

**Tel: 02**  
**Tel: 02 4655 3383**

## LOOPS AND LANDINGS

Inspired by John Kingsford-Smith

### WELCOME TO 2001

The January 2001 issue of National Geographic contains an article '2001 *The Body in Space, Surviving the Odyssey*'. In an introduction, Arthur C. Clarke, who collaborated with Stanley Kubrick on the 1968 classic film, '2001, *ASpace Odyssey*', makes a further prediction. "The third millenium will be the real age of space.....What we may discover during the forth-coming exploration of the solar system will shape the future of humanity. And beyond the planets lies the inconceivably vaster universe of stars and galaxies. Though we may well be the only children of this particular sun, can we be egocentric enough to believe that self-styled H. Sapiens is the single intelligent life form the cosmos has produced in billions of years on trillions of worlds? The truth is indeed out there, and one day we will find it - or it will find us. Then we will learn whether we are closer to the angels or the apes!"

I remember my first viewing of '2001 *A Space Odyssey*'. It was at Christchurch New Zealand, on Monday 11th September 1978, at a time when the travel itinerary for Mr & Mrs W. J. Scott and family assured us that we would be homeward bound on Air New Zealand flight 807, high above the Tasman in a DC8. The previous day we had ended our New Zealand holiday by attending the 50th Anniversary Southern Cross Air Pageant, at the Wigram Air Base, to commemorate the first crossing of the Tasman by air. The Southern Cross, with Smithy, Ulm, Litchfield and McWilliams as crew, took off from Richmond on Monday, 10th September 1928 at 5.43pm, landing at Wigram the next day at 9.22am local time. A highlight of the 50th anniversary celebrations was a double crossing of the Tasman by Cliff Tait in a Fletcher FU24-950, registered ZK-USU. He left Wigram at midday on the Saturday, flew to Sydney and returned to Wigram, landing just 24 hours later during the Air Pageant. Harold Litchfield, the only surviving member of the Southern Cross crew, also arrived at the Pageant during the afternoon, in a de Havilland Drover, to re-enact the historic landing.

And so fifty years to the day, to the hour, almost to the minute of the arrival of the Southern Cross, the Scott family set out for Christchurch International Airport, to carry out its own commemorative flight, albeit in reverse. The Southern Cross actually flew back in the direction we planned to travel on 13th/14th October 1928. But our very own re-enactment was not to be. To our extreme embarrassment, we were turned back at the frontier. I had failed to reconfirm our reservation. That afternoon was spent in a Christchurch cinema watching '2001 *ASpace Odyssey*', re-released to commemorate its own 10th anniversary. The film made some brave predictions about what might be achieved by way of space travel at the turn of the century, despite the malevolence of computers like HAL 9000. After three decades the film retains some credibility. The real 2001 will see the end of the space station *Mir*, continuation of work on a new International space station, and Australian astronaut Andy Thomas once more in orbit in the space shuttle *Discovery*.

For some reason The National Council for the Centenary of Federation did not adopt *OZ2001* for the programme of events planned throughout this year. Instead it is being used by the Nevil Shute Norway Foundation, which will host the Nevil Shute Convention at Frankston, Victoria, from March 18th to 23rd. Details about the convention are available from Colin Ackehurst, ph 3 5975 7842 or email <ackehurst@peninsular.starway.net.au>. The convention brochure states that, "Nevil Shute (Norway) was a pilot; a pioneer aeronautical engineer; a moral, political and economic philosopher; a prognosticator of some regard; a great storyteller; and, in his time, the most popular living English author." For simplicity I will use the author's pseudonym hereafter.

The centenary of Nevil Shute's birthday, 17th January 1899, was celebrated two years ago by the Nevil Shute Norway Foundation at Albuquerque, New Mexico. As an author he drew on his experience as an aeronautical engineer extensively, and, for his readers, was able to describe technical detail with clarity and credibility. Some of his novels were adapted for the movie screen; *No Highway*, *The Pied Piper*, *A Town Like Alice* and *On The Beach* among them. His durability as a storyteller is about to be demonstrated by a new mini-series of *On The Beach* for television, produced in Melbourne where the first film version was shot in 1959. It will be shown on Channel 7, at 8.30pm Sunday 28th January. With OZ2001 following on in March, there will be a renewed focus on Nevil Shute, who chose to make Australia his home during the last decade of his life, from 1950 to 1960.

If there is one of his novels, that relates to the current Centenary of Federation celebrations, it is *In The Wet*. However, if the predictions he made in that novel had been at all accurate, we would be celebrating a very different Australia this year. The book was first published in 1953, and in an author's note he explained that he was trying to picture the relations of the Commonwealth countries in thirty years time, i.e. about 1983. The hero is an indigenous Australian, Wing Commander David Anderson, RAAF, who is in charge of a new addition to the Queen's Flight, a de Havilland 316 *Ceres*, which is a gift to the Queen from the Australian Government. Because of strong Republican sentiment, exhibited by the incumbent United Kingdom Prime Minister and his Cabinet, the Queen finds it prudent to appoint a Governor-General to look after her affairs in London and decamp with her consort to Canberra for an extended stay. High drama ensues as David disposes of a bomb on board during the flight to Australia etc. But how would this scenario have fitted in to the Republic vs Constitutional Monarchy debate of recent memory? *In The Wet* was used by Nevil Shute to explain why he left England and chose Australia to spend his most productive years as a writer. Still strong in his psyche was his experience with airships and the disaster that overtook the R101. In his autobiography, *Slide Rule*, published a year after *In The Wet*, he writes, "A man's own experiences determine his opinions, of necessity. I was thirty-one years old at the time of the R101 disaster, and my first close contact with senior civil servants and politicians at work was in the field of airships, where I watched them produce disaster. That experience still colours much of my thinking. I am very willing to recognise the good in many men of these two classes, but a politician or a civil servant is still to me an arrogant fool till he is proved otherwise."

When government support for airship construction ceased in 1930, the staff of the Vickers subsidiary, Airship Guarantee Co Ltd, was sacked. Immediately afterwards, Nevil Shute discussed starting a small aeroplane manufacturing company with Hessel Tiltman, who had worked with him as chief designer. And so Airspeed Ltd was founded. There were a few Airspeed aircraft that appeared on the Australian Civil Register. AS.5A Courier VH-UUF; AS.6A Envoy VH-UXY *Stella Australis*, in which Charles Ulm, George Littlejohn and Leon Skilling lost their lives; AS.6H Envoy VH-UXM, operated by Ansett Airways Pty Ltd, and the three AS.57 Ambassador 2s VH-BUI, J & K, operated by our late patron Arthur Butler. Australian World War II aircrew, who trained in Australia or Canada, will have fond memories of the Airspeed AS.10 Oxford, that stalwart of the EATS. Personal disagreements, principally between Shute and Tiltman, lead to a decision by the Board, in April 1938, to support Tiltman and cast Shute adrift. This effectively ended his career in the aviation industry. During WWII he chose to serve in the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve. Nevertheless, the final sentence of *Slide Rule* reads; "once a man has spent his time in messing about with aeroplanes he can never forget their heartaches and their joys, nor is he likely to find another occupation that will satisfy him so well, even writing novels". Nevil Shute died of a stroke, at home in Langwarrin, on 12th January 1960, just short of his 61st birthday. His ashes were spread over the English Channel.....**John Scott.**

## PORTMARNOCK BEACH, IRELAND.

Over the years, I had read of Portmarnock Beach, Ireland, some 12 kms from Dublin, being used as a take-off point by Charles Kingsford Smith (1930), James Mollison (1932), and Charles Ulm (1933) for their flights across the Atlantic Ocean to North America. Smithy and Mollison were successful, but Ulm's aircraft, "Faith in Australia", was unable to take-off due to a collapsed undercarriage, and the flight was abandoned.

For their transatlantic attempt in 1928, Messrs Kohl, Fitzmaurice and Hunefeld, flying "Bremen". a Junkers Ju W-33, had taken off with difficulty from Baldonnel Aerodrome, also just outside Dublin.

So, when my wife and I decided to visit Ireland in 1996, one important attraction for this particular traveller was a visit to Portmarnock Beach.... "Can we visit nearby Malahide Castle, too?" asked my wife. Of course, we did!

I was also curious whether there was any recognition at the beach of the historic nature (in aviation terms, anyway) of its use as a take-off point for flights to North America, particularly by Smithy and the "Southern Cross".

After all, the aircraft was the same one which had been the first to fly across the Pacific Ocean, and the flight across the Atlantic Ocean was the second last leg of a true round-the-world flight, success at which would make it the first aircraft to achieve this feat .... at the same time, making Smithy the first man to achieve the same feat.

Came the day when my curiosity would be satisfied. We drove out from Dublin on a fine, sunny Friday to Portmarnock. As it is a long beach, I realised searching for any memorial could take sooe time. Driving north with the beach on my right, I was about to park when I noticed a car space on the beach side of the road, where I parked the car. We noticed we were opposite some steps leading down to the beach.

I got out of the car, and proceeded to walk down the steps, which led to a promenade. Ahead of me, fixed to the safety fence on the beach side of the promenade, I saw a framed notice with some aircraft images on it!

The notice was a plaque erected by the Dublin County Council and unveiled on 14.6.85. It showed drawings of the "Southern Cross" and James Mollison's "The Heart's Content", and some details of their respective flights.

Now, I have some Irish heritage, but was parking the car at the exact spot the luck of the Irish, or just pure chance?!

Obviously, I was very pleased that some people in Ireland cared about recognising the contribution Portmarnock Beach had made to world aviation.

I took photos of the plaque and the beach, and, after a short time reflecting on what happened all those years ago, we proceeded on our journey through Ireland.

Arriving back home, I had the film developed, only to find I had half a photo of the plaque. I had started a new roll of film, and forgot to use the first exposure on an unimportant subject?!

What to do?

I now knew there was a plaque at Portmarnock, commemorating those departures of years ago, but I had no photo!

I contacted the Irish Tourist Board in Sydney, and was advised to contact the Fingal County Council, which had been created in 1994 when Dublin County Council was divided into three regional councils (not like here!). I wrote to Fingal, explaining what had happened, enclosing a copy of my "half plaque".

The response was most gratifying.

I received a photo large enough to show the details on the plaque, and a detailed photocopy, measuring 83.5cms x 40cms, of the actual plaque.

The plaque had been unveiled by Cllr. Bernadette Malone, who had moved on to become a member of the European Parliament.

I wrote to her, seeking more information about a plaque which had been erected some 50 years after the events it is commemorating.

Her reply was more than I could have expected, and included

1. a photo of her unveiling the plaque,
2. a copy of a letter, dated 22.11.81, to Cllr Malone from the Aviation Society of Ireland Preservation Group, written by Liam Byrne (see 3. below), confirming discussions about the need for a "Commemorative Plaque for Southern Cross at Portmarnock", and
3. a copy from "THE IRISH TIMES", dated 25.6.80, of the concluding article by Liam Byrne of "the historic flight of the 'Southern Cross' across the Atlantic Ocean."

In terms of historical aviation information, I felt I had won the lottery!

However, my part Irish heritage was not enough to help me understand one expression used in Liam Byrne's letter to Cllr. Malone.

The letter stated "The legendary Australian Fokker aircraft Southern Cross and its owner and pilot Sir Charles Kingsford Smith ... also Australian, came to Ireland in June 1930 to fly the Atlantic from west to east."....I re-read the last four words..... from west to east."?1 and later, "This was the first completely successful crossing of the Atlantic by aircraft from west to east." .... there it was again!

I could understand placing emphasis on the "Southern Cross", and not Smithy, as justification for erecting a plaque at Portmarnock Beach, but I could not understand "...from west to east." It could not be a typing error!?

The letter went on to state "The first east west flight (the easy way) was of course made by Charles Lindbergh."....end of confusion!.... "The first east west flight..... must mean from the east coast of North America to the west coast of Europe, and vice-versa in the case of the "Southern Cross".

From my photographic mistake at Portmarnock Beach, I had benefitted far more than I could ever have expected when I took the photo of the plaque.

Keith White

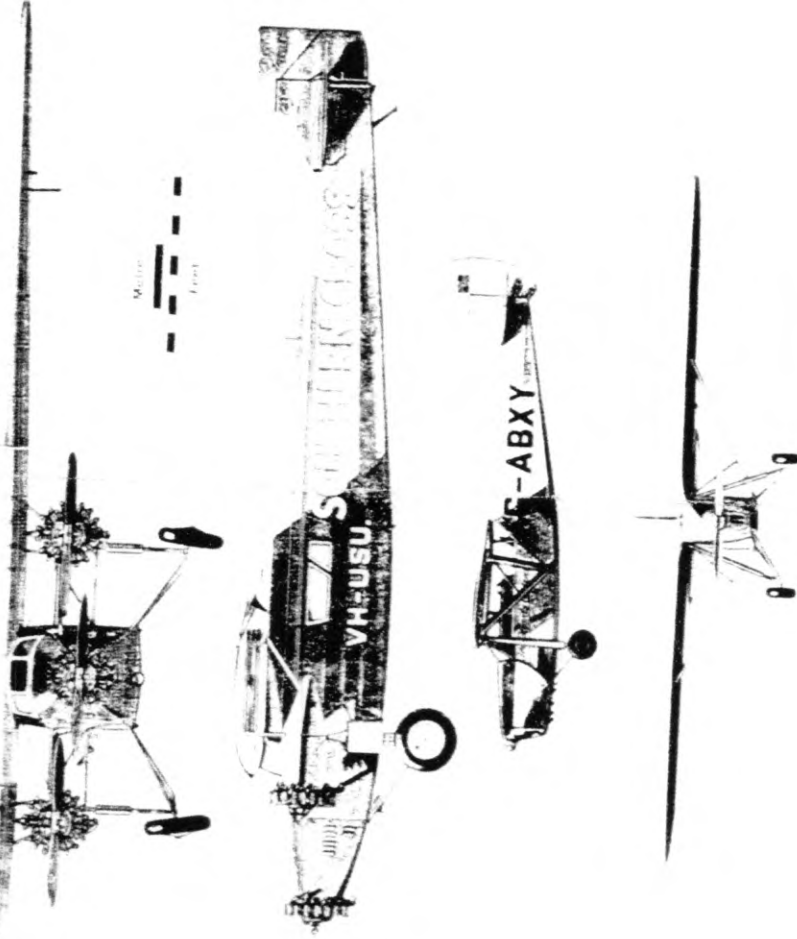
This plaque was unveiled by Cllr. B. Malone  
Chairman Dublin County Council, to commemorate  
Portmarnock's contribution to world aviation history.

It was from this beach, on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1930,  
that the famous Australian aircraft, Southern Cross,  
piloted by the legendary Charles Kingsford Smith  
and navigated by the Dubliner, Captain J. P. Saul  
departed on its pioneering Atlantic flight to  
Harbour Grace, Newfoundland, where it landed safely  
some 31 1/2 hours later. Also in the crew were  
John Stannage and Evert Van Dyk



It was also from this beach, on 18<sup>th</sup> August 1932  
that James Molison made the first solo East West  
flight across the Atlantic in the De Havilland  
Puss Moth aircraft "The Heart's Content".

Dublin County Council Parks Department





# AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW) Inc.

AHSA (NSW) Inc

ABN: 83 295 759 224

PO Box K346 Haymarket NSW 1238

## ***Southern Skies***

The Newsletter of NSW Branch

March 2001 No.339

### ***March Meeting***

Wednesday 7 March 2001, 7.45pm at the Powerhouse Museum. Enter from the Macarthur Street end and the meeting room is in the new area near the entrance. Visitors are most welcome and need not be accompanied by a member.

The business of the meeting will be,

### ***The 37<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting***

The President, Honorary Secretary and Honorary Treasurer will present their respective reports on the activities and finances of the Branch for the 2000 year. All positions on the Committee will then be declared vacant, and an election for all positions will be carried out. Any financial member may be nominated for any position. Nomination and proxy forms are attached to this newsletter. As always, the Society depends on your support, and new faces to the Committee will be most welcome.

An aviation video will be shown after the AGM.

### ***February Meeting***

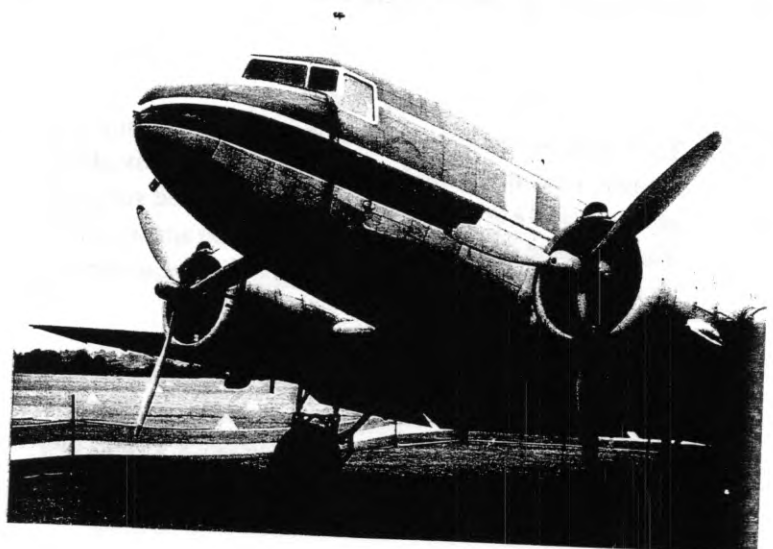
The meeting featured the DC3/C47 in Australia, commemorating the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first flight of the DC3 (17 December 1935). The first attraction was a video that followed the return flight of a cargo DC3 operated by Four Star Aviation between Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. As has been said many times before, the owners of the company claimed that no other aircraft could operate the service as efficiently and economically as the DC3 and they had no plans to replace the current fleet.

For the second half, we were treated to a variety of slides of DC3s and C47s in Australian service featuring operators such as Aadastra Aerial Services, Aero Service Corporation, Airfast, ANA, Air Nostalgia, Airlines of NSW, Airlines of SA, Air Queensland, Ansett-ANA, Ansett Victorian Air Coach Services, Australian Aid, BBA Cargo, Bush Pilots Airways, Butler Air Transport, Connair, CSIRO, Dakota National Air, DC3 Australia,

DC3 Queensland, Department of Civil Aviation, East West Airlines, Fleet Air, Flight Australia, Forrestair, HARS, Ipec, Jetair, Mackay Air Museum, MacRobertson Miller Airlines, Masling, Paradak, Qantas, Queensland Pacific, Rebel Air, Setair, South Pacific, TAA, Travair, Travmar, Vintage Air Travel, RAAF and RAN. Contributors were Eric Favelle, David Eyre, Rob Tracz, Dudley Reynolds and Warwick Bigsworth.

Some of our avid photographers captured shots of the same aircraft at near identical spots, and we covered a great percentage of the DC3 operators in Australia. Of particular historic note were slides provided by Dudley Reynolds with HRH Queen Elizabeth II inspecting the guard at Sydney Airport during the Royal Visit in 1954, along with the RAAF VIP C47s used on the tour. It is a pity that colour transparency film was somewhat rare when the likes of John Fairfax, Zinc Corporation, Ansett Airways, Guinea Airways, pre-Ansett MMA and Queensland Airlines were operating DC3s.

Al Bovelt generously made available a handout listing all VH- registered DC2s, DC3s and DC5. The list includes the 49 surviving examples in Australia, although only 16 (maybe) are still in a flyable condition.



### ***Incorporation of the Society***

Members will be aware that we became an incorporated entity on 5 November 2000. The benefits of incorporation are listed for your information.

The Associations Incorporation Act 1984 allows organisations such as our Society a means of establishing a legal entity that is separate from the individual members, rather than forming a company. Members of unincorporated bodies can be sued as individuals, whereas incorporation provides a certain amount of limited liability for members as long as they follow accepted business and community standards.

Incorporation allows the Society to:

- continue regardless of changes to membership;
- enter into and enforce contracts including the power to hold, acquire and deal with property;
- sue or be sued; and
- accept gifts and bequests.

The Society has adopted the Model Rules as provided by the NSW Department of Fair Trading, along with five additional clauses that cover:

- the appointment of an Auditor – following the AGM;
- a statement confirming that we are a non-profit organisation;
- distribution of surplus funds, should the Society be wound up for any reason;
- a statement indicating that the Honorary Secretary shall be the Public Officer; and
- that our financial year is from 1 January to 31 December.

The Committee has responsibilities regarding record keeping and the availability of such to members. An Attendance Book is now provided at each meeting and will include Minutes of each Committee meeting.

The Society is also required to maintain public liability insurance of at least \$2.0 million.

### ***On the Internet***

The Clyde North Aeronautical Preservation Group was formed to promote and preserve all aspects of aviation, and contains a wide range of aviation related subjects. There is some interesting data on individual aircraft types, so take a look at ([www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/Hangar/7774/index.html](http://www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/Hangar/7774/index.html)).

The Sydney Airport Enthusiast WWW Site ([www.acay.com.au/~willt/yssy/](http://www.acay.com.au/~willt/yssy/)) includes an overview and history of the airport, ATC frequencies, airport map

and runway information and lots more. There is a message board, which seems to be a domain for the youngsters.

Further to historical information on TAA as mentioned in last month's issue of *Southern Skies*, another site that is worth a visit is Owen O'Malley and the 462 Squadron ([www.owenomalley.com/index.htm](http://www.owenomalley.com/index.htm)). The site is dedicated to Owen O'Malley who was killed in the Wirraway crash at Nowra in 1999, but who had a most fascinating aviation career, including time as one of the original TAA pilots.

If you didn't get enough of Douglas aircraft from the February meeting and issue of *Southern Skies*, take a look at Big Dougs (<http://members.aol.com/airnikon/bigdougs.htm>).

The Avalon Airshow is over for another two years and many who attended might have been disappointed with the lack of warbirds. So, if you have a yearning for such, have a look at Australian Warbirds at ([www.australianwarbirds.com.au](http://www.australianwarbirds.com.au)).

### ***Calendar of Events***

10 - 11 March 2001 OZKOSH Downunder, Mordialloc Victoria

11 March – 7 April 2001 London to Sydney Centenary Air Race 2001

24 – 25 March 2001 Antique Aeroplane Association of Australia Inc National Fly in, Parkes NSW

4 April 2001 AHSA (NSW) Inc Annual Aviation Trivia and Aircraft Recognition Competition, Powerhouse Museum

July 2001 Official opening Australian Aviation Museum Bankstown (exact date to be advised)

6 – 8 October 2001 Warbirds over Scone. Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> practice day and muster; Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> air show; Monday 8<sup>th</sup> recovery and departure.

21 October 2001 Australian Aerial Patrol Open Day, Albion Park Aerodrome NSW.

### ***Notices***

A Committee meeting will be held immediately prior to the March meeting, commencing at 6.30pm sharp.

If there are topics of particular interest to you or that you think others may be interested in please let us know or simply jot it down and post to PO Box 335 Camden NSW 2570, Email to [garlandk@ideal.net.au](mailto:garlandk@ideal.net.au) or fax to 02 4655 3363

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## LOOPS AND LANDINGS

Inspired by John Kingsford-Smith

### ORIGINS OF THE RAAF EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

During the past year or so the Royal Aeronautical Society has been printing a series of short biographies in its UK periodical *The Aerospace Professional*. The biographies are those of individuals honoured by named lectures, conducted annually by the various branches of the Society, including those overseas. The Dec 2000 issue contains a biography for Named Lecture No 13: Lawrence Hargrave, contributed by Ian Debenham. The Jan 2001 issue contains a biography for Named Lecture No 14: Sir Lawrence Wackett. The latter is a joint R Aes / I E Aust annual lecture, inaugurated in 1955 in Melbourne. Sir Lawrence himself delivered the 1958 lecture.

Brian Riddle, the R Aes librarian, commenting on Ian Debenham's contribution, stated that the Society's library holds letters and other manuscripts of Lawrence Hargrave, presented by Hargrave's widow in 1920. The collection consists of around 71 original manuscript letters in Hargrave's hand, over 100 contemporary letters by Hargrave's associates G. Taylor, S. H. R. Salmon and others; 70 original glass plate negatives; two large photograph albums, Hargrave's original lantern slides and the author's copies of his various papers published by the Royal Society of NSW. A particular gem is a letter to Hargrave from Wilbur Wright dated Jan 28, 1904, which is the earliest of the Society's extensive files of original Wright Brothers' correspondence. This fabulous bequest was acknowledged just eighty years ago in the March 1921 issue of *The Aeronautical Journal*.

Perhaps Wilbur Wright had been on the mind of Lawrence Wackett when he named his son Wilbur Lawrence. Sir Lawrence dedicated his autobiography *Aircraft Pioneer* to the memory of his son, Squadron Leader Wackett who was lost while flying a Beaufighter of 31 Sqn RAAF, during a sortie over the Timor Sea on September 24, 1944. Coincidentally it was the Bristol airframe designer, Frank Barnwell, who planned the Beaufighter development and who, during an earlier sojourn in Australia with his wife and three sons about 1921/23, was Wackett's personal tutor in aeronautical engineering. Barnwell himself was killed in an aeroplane accident in August 1938. Within two years of the outbreak of WWII, all three sons, by then RAF fighter pilots, had been killed in action.

Sir Lawrence Wackett was on my mind last year when visiting St Judes Anglican Church at Randwick. A little further along Avoca Street is *Archina*, the Federation house once occupied by the RAAF Experimental Section. I took the opportunity to inspect the location where, at Lawrence Wackett's initiative, the RAAF carried out the design and construction of aircraft during the period of its occupancy from Jan 14, 1924 to Sep 8, 1930, when the Army took charge.

The last occupying unit of the Army, a logistic support group, vacated the property in 1993. By the beginning of 1998, the area on which the historic workshops once stood had been cleared and levelled. Randwick Council approved plans for townhouse and semi-detached terrace development. The new residences were completed early in 2000. However the two original heritage residences *Archina*, used as a design/admin office by the Experimental Section, and *Ascot*, used as a residence by Wackett and his family, still remain.

Wackett wrote in his autobiography; "After training under Frank Barnwell I wanted to design and build an aeroplane completely of my own conception. It was a problem of magnitude but also of vision, and nothing would deter me." At this time surplus WWI establishments were being offered for sale and Randwick was one of them.

The fact that suitable facilities existed in a residential area of Randwick was in itself remarkable. And it is possible that Wackett was not fully aware of the political odium associated with the site.

However it is certain that politicians and senior public servants were. It is therefore even more remarkable that Wackett was able to persuade -- the Air Board, Air Force Headquarters, the Controller of Civil Aviation and the Minister for Defence, Mr E. K. Bowden -- that Federal Government funds should be risked on what could be one man's impossible dream. Nevertheless the sale of the property was stopped and the Air Council approved Wackett's proposal.

In 1983 Father J. H. McMahon MSC read a paper to the Australian Catholic Historical Society entitled *Father Archibald Shaw : The Wireless Priest*. This explains how Fr Shaw, then a Procurator for the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, came to live at Ascot in 1907 and involve himself in wireless transmission. The Order also owned *Archina*, and Fr Shaw erected masts in the area between the two houses. He constructed workshops, employing up to 170 men at the peak of activity, manufacturing wireless components. Diversification was also on his mind. When the Federal Government announced a competition in 1909 for the construction of an aeroplane, Fr Shaw contemplated entering and at least got to the design stage. He was awarded government contracts and, following the outbreak of WWI, turned his hand to making 18-pounder shells and repairing machine guns. At a later stage overhaul of aircraft engines was carried out at Randwick.

It was perhaps not surprising that the finances of the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart and the Shaw Wireless Company became entangled, complicated and stretched. So much so that the MSH sent an inspector from Rome to look into the whole matter. It was made clear to Fr Shaw that he must dispose of his patents and the whole factory to clear his debts, and make restitution to the MSH. A hint of the scandal that lay ahead is given by the following extract from Fr McMahon's paper.

" An approach was made to the Federal Government and Fr Shaw got a friend, a Senator Long from Tasmania, to help him draft a letter to the Minister for the Navy, Senator Jensen, who with the onset of the war had become responsible for wireless telegraphy.....Long's son was an apprentice at the Randwick works, and they apparently had a mutual interest in horse racing..... Fr Shaw had an independent evaluation made of the works and after some haggling the Federal Government offered him £55000 for the whole deal."

Finally, on Friday August 18, 1916, the money was paid into a Melbourne bank account and Fr Shaw was there the next day drawing cheques to pay off his many creditors. He also withdrew £5300 in large denomination notes. During the later Royal Commission into the affair, it was established that Senator Long had received £2400 in cash from Fr Shaw that afternoon at Parliament House. It was also suspected that a similar amount was received by Minister Jensen, although this was vigorously denied.

Who was in Fr Shaw's company during the following two days is a mystery. On Monday morning he was found unconscious in his hotel room, dressed in mufti. He did not regain consciousness and died on August 26, at the age of 43. There was a post mortem examination and the death certificate stated under *cause of death* ; chronic nephritis / cerebral haemorrhage / indefinite. Despite the circumstances, the Victorian Police found no grounds for a murder investigation. There were of course political casualties as well. Both Senator Long and Minister Jensen were forced to resign as a result of the Royal Commission findings.

By the time Lawrence Wackett moved into Randwick the Navy had long since departed, having transferred the workshops to the Department of Repatriation for the training of returned servicemen. Wackett found that, "the trainees had brutally abused the plant and machinery, so that fully eighty percent was completely unserviceable."

From this inauspicious beginning, and with some early assistance from Harry Broadsmith and workers from the failed Australian Aircraft & Engineering Co, Wackett was able to keep Sydney in the business of aircraft manufacture during the twenties. ----- **John Scott**



# AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW) Inc.

AHSA (NSW) Inc

ABN: 83 295 759 224

PO Box K346 Haymarket NSW 1238

## **Southern Skies**

The Newsletter of NSW Branch

April 2001 No.340

### **April Meeting**

Wednesday 4 April 2001, 7.45pm at the Powerhouse Museum. Enter from the Macarthur Street end and the meeting room is in the new area near the entrance. Visitors are most welcome and need not be accompanied by a member.

The business of the meeting will be

### **The 18<sup>th</sup> Aviation Trivia Competition and 33<sup>rd</sup> Aircraft Recognition Competition**

It's that time of the year again. These prestigious competitions are open to all-comers and the winners will receive not only book prizes, but also will be awarded the invaluable Slipstream Trophy for Aviation Trivia and the equally aesthetic Brian White Memorial Trophy for Aircraft Recognition.

Keith Hudson, the current holder of the Slipstream Trophy, will conduct this year's trivia quiz, followed by the aircraft recognition competition that will be conducted by Robin Mead, current holder of the Brian White Memorial Trophy.

So review your aircraft recognition handbooks and reference books and be there early to secure your seat. There will be a small charge to cover costs of prizes and of course supper will be available after the meeting.

Last year's winners are reminded to bring their coveted trophies to the meeting for presentation to the next lucky winners.

### **March Meeting - Annual General Meeting**

This was the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting and was chaired by the Honorary Secretary, Warwick Bigsworth in lieu of Society President, Ian Debenham, who was unable to attend due to illness.

### **Honorary Secretary's Report**

Warwick Bigsworth noted the achievements of the year, the most significant of which was the Incorporation of the Society on 9 November 2000. The benefits of Incorporation were explained in last month's issue of *Southern Skies*. Other highlights of the report were:

- During the process of gaining incorporation, considerable dialogue with the Aviation Historical Society of Australia Inc, based in Melbourne, was necessary. It is hoped that this dialogue will continue in order to maintain good relations between the two organisations. Membership to AHSA Inc is \$40 per annum and members receive 4 copies of *Aviation Heritage* and the *AHSA Newsletter* each year.
- Two of our eleven meetings last year were held at the Australian Aviation Museum, Bankstown, and it is our intention to continue to hold one or two meetings per year at that venue. Details will be advised in *Southern Skies*.
- *Southern Skies* has featured a few new sections and contributions from members will always be welcome, as well as any suggestions in ways to improve the newsletter. Thanks were expressed to John Scott for his regular contributions and especially to Ken Garland and Jack Powell who compile and distribute the newsletter.
- Members were advised that the Society is a member of, or exchanges newsletters with, other associations including the Royal Australian Historical Society, Royal Aeronautical Society, Australian Society of World War I Aero Historians and State Records. Copies of their newsletters and Journals are available for loan through the Honorary Secretary.

Warwick thanked all members of the Committee for their assistance and support through the year.

### **Honorary Treasurer's Report**

The Honorary Treasurer's Income and Expenditure Statement is enclosed with this newsletter. At 31 December 2000, the Society had 64 financial members plus 5 life members. Total income for 2000 was \$1774.65 and expenditure was \$1664.41. Total accumulated funds were \$6034.55.

### **Election of Office Bearers**

Following the Reports, Robin Mead was invited to take the Chair and preside over the election of office bearers. The results were:

President	Ian Debenham
Honorary Secretary	Warwick Bigsworth
Honorary Treasurer	Keith White
Photo Archivist	Jim Payens
General Committee	Bryan Clayton
	Ken Garland
	Keith Hudson
	Roger Kennedy
	Jack Powell
	John Scott

There were no nominations for the position of Vice-president. The Committee has appointed Keith Titmuss as Honorary Auditor.

Following the AGM, the video "Wings on the Desert" was shown. This video details the story and development of the Pima Air and Space Museum, Tucson Arizona, featuring many of the exhibits and particularly noted the reliance on the efforts of volunteers to make the venture so successful. Where have I heard that before?

### **On the Internet**

Plane Spotting in Australia ([www.alphalink.com.au/~cask/ausfields.html](http://www.alphalink.com.au/~cask/ausfields.html)). If you like visiting those country airfields to check the local inhabitants, then this might be just the site for you. The currency of the information might be doubtful at some places, but most interesting nonetheless.

Kiwis might not fly, but there is much aviation history in the Land of the Long White Cloud. The Aviation Historical Society of New Zealand (<http://ahsnz.tripod.com>) site is well designed with plenty of sound and action.

Many sites feature very comprehensive data on Australian Aviation history, and the Australian Aviation Archive ([www.chariot.net.au/~theburfs/archive.html](http://www.chariot.net.au/~theburfs/archive.html)) is no exception. You'll find a military aircraft index, civil aircraft index, aviation personalities and much more.

Several directories have been listed before, but one which has many, many links is Howard Curtis' Web Site, a.k.a. the Airtel web site ([www.airnet.cwc.net/](http://www.airnet.cwc.net/)). You can spend hours surfing this site!

There are hundreds of sites which relate to World War II aviation, but one of the more fascinating ones is Luft46 ([www.luft46.com/](http://www.luft46.com/)). During WWII German aircraft designers put forward many ideas which ranged from practical to bizarre. Within this site you'll find descriptions of these projects, with drawings and photos.

### **Calendar of Events**

11 March – 7 April 2001 London to Sydney Centenary Air Race 2001 (follow their progress on [www.airrace.com.au](http://www.airrace.com.au))  
2 May 2001 AHSA meeting topic tba  
June 2001 Official opening Australian Aviation Museum Bankstown (exact date to be advised)  
29 – 30 September 2001 RAAF 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Air Show Amberley Queensland – also featuring the USAF Thunderbirds  
6 – 8 October 2001 Warbirds over Scone. Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> practice day and muster; Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> air show; Monday 8<sup>th</sup> recovery and departure.  
21 October 2001 Australian Aerial Patrol Open Day, Albion Park Aerodrome NSW.

### **News**

Ken Garland 02 4655 3383  
Warwick Bigsworth 02 9872 2323

Please note the change of address, telephone and fax numbers for Ken Garland and the newsletter. If there are topics of particular interest to you or that you think others may be interested in please let us know or simply jot it down and post to PO Box 777 Camden NSW 2570, Email to [garlandk@ideal.net.au](mailto:garlandk@ideal.net.au) or fax to 02 4655 3363

We have the ability to reproduce documents or photographs in a number of formats.

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## LOOPS AND LANDINGS

Inspired by John Kingsford-Smith

### JIMMY MELROSE AND HIS FAMOUS UNCLE NOEL PEMBERTON BILLING

On January 16th, Christie's held the first exclusive camera sale of 2001 at their London auction rooms. The star of the auction was the prototype *phantom* camera, designed and built in 1946 by Noel Pemberton Billing. It was estimated to reach £12,000. It sold for £146,750. It was good to see that P.B. hadn't lost his touch!

The *phantom* camera was a late invention in the eventful life of Noel Pemberton Billing. He died on Remembrance Day 1948. An obituary, by C. G. Grey, appeared in *The Aeroplane*. "He was born in Hampstead in 1880. His father, Charles Eardley Billing, was a Birmingham iron-founder, his mother was a Claridge of Coventry, so he was English of the English. And by nature and profession he was an adventurer of adventurers. Because he founded the historic Supermarine firm, and because he was so to speak, the illegitimate father of the Air Ministry and the Royal Air Force, and was one of the first generation of air pioneers he deserves peculiar attention in this paper.....in 1906, news came that the Wrights had flown. P.B. found a man to put up £150 to build a flying machine. Also he found a deserted village and some derelict land at Fambridge, Essex, and started what was, I believe, the first aerodrome in England." At about this time too, P.B.'s brother Eardley was experimenting with a simple form of flight simulator as a training device!

Philip Jarrett takes up the story. "One day in the Autumn of 1913, having been away from the aviation scene since the failure of his Fambridge flying ground in 1909, Billing paid a visit to Hendon to renew old acquaintances. Not surprisingly he was unmercifully chipped, as flying had progressed a great deal in those few years, and people were now taking to the air with unprecedented regularity. During a conversation, Frederick Handley Page challenged him to a competition. A wager of £500 was to be paid to the first to gain his RAeC Certificate, starting at dawn on Wednesday September 17, 1913. A further condition was that the certificate had to be awarded before dawn the following day. P.B. was successful before breakfast, and was awarded Aviator's Certificate No. 632." Four days earlier in Adelaide, South Australia, P.B.'s sister Hildergarde Melrose had given birth to a son, Charles James. Hildergarde Westley Billing had married into the Melrose family of prominent lawyers, legislators and pastoralists. But sadly, her husband James Melrose died when her only child was nine years old. The life pendulum for young Jimmy Melrose had swung towards the Billing line of industrialists, inventors and adventurers.

P.B. established Pemberton-Billing Ltd at Woolston, Southampton to build flying boats. He created the name *Supermarine* as the firm's telegraphic address. By March 1914 he was exhibiting PB1, the first of his 55 design projects, at the Olympia Aero Show. At the outbreak of WWI, P.B. left his chief designer, Hubert Scott-Paine in charge of the works and joined the RNAS. He was given the task of organising history's first strategic bombing raid, an attack on the Zeppelin sheds at Friedrichshafen; successfully carried out on November 21, 1914, using Avro 504K's. During 1915 he saw first hand the superiority of Anthony Fokker's monoplanes over British aircraft such as the B.E.2c. He began to agitate for better equipment through his commanding officers and politicians. Failing to get any support, he received permission to resign from the RNAS to stand for parliament himself. He was duly elected MP for Hertford in January 1916. To clear any charge of impropriety he sold his interest in *Supermarine* just as a new designer, R.J. Mitchell joined the firm. By March P.B. was on his feet in Parliament declaring, "May I refer briefly to the hundreds, nay thousands of machines which

have been ordered and which have been referred to by our pilots at the Front as *Fokker Fodder?* Every one of our pilots knows that when he steps into one, if he gets back it will be more by good luck and by his skill than by any mechanical assistance he will get from the people who provide him with the machines.....I would suggest that quite a number of our gallant officers in the Royal Flying Corps have been rather murdered than killed." The cat, having thus been set amongst the pigeons, the Government responded by appointing the Air Enquiry Committee which led in turn to creation of the Air Ministry and eventually to the formation of the Royal Air Force. A further consequence of P.B.'s stirring was the encouragement of private enterprise, particularly the innovative genius of the Tom Sopwith-Harry Hawker team, which became a prodigious supplier of fighter aircraft to the RFC.

By 1921, P.B.'s time as a politician was over and the inventor re-emerged. With a group of former RFC engineering associates he began making *constant surface speed* long playing gramophone records. Then, with his first wife Dot seriously ill, he decided to take her on an ocean voyage and visit his sister in Adelaide. His beloved Dot died in Adelaide two weeks after their arrival. But for Jimmy, this was his first face to face encounter with his uncle, starting a series of regular contacts lasting up to his death on July 5, 1936. During this visit P.B. noted that his L.P. records were selling well in Australia. It was decided to move his entire operation to Melbourne. There, his factory in Bay Street, Brighton also housed a broadcast transmitter, *3PB*, from which Australia's first pre-recorded radio broadcasts were conducted. P.B. continued his activities in Australia until the end of 1925 when he returned to England.

In May 1926, Hilda and son Jimmy left Australia for England to join P.B. There they remained for over three years, finally returning to Adelaide in August 1929. On June 9, 1933, Jimmy Melrose flew solo for the first time. In August 1934 he broke the Round - Australia record in his Puss Moth VH - UQO *My Hildergarde*. The following month he flew *My Hildergarde* to England, and returned in her during October as a competitor in the Mac. Robertson Centenary Air Race. One year later he was back in England to take delivery of Percival Gull VH-UVH *Westley* which he then flew out to Australia. In March 1936 he was again in England to pick up his third aircraft, Heston Phoenix VH-AJM *Billing*, which he also flew back home and in which he was to lose his life. Whenever he was in England he spent time with his uncle. The close relationship between Jimmy and his mother is well recorded, but the influence of P.B. was also strong. The author of *The Jimmy Melrose Story*, Eric Gunton, wrote, "Ever since a child Uncle P.B. had been a great hero in Jimmy's eyes. His aviation feats, his navy record and his inventive genius had all been a source of inspiration to his young nephew." At the time of the Centenary Air Race there appeared in *The Sydney Mail* a photograph of P.B. and Jimmy striding off a tennis court together, looking perhaps more like father and son than uncle and nephew.

After his death a nation mourned for Jimmy Melrose. There is probably a Melrose Street or other reminder in your part of town. There is certainly one in mine. But in Ryde Municipal Council the residents of a small enclave in the extreme south west of the municipality were rewarded, in February 1999, by having their area officially recognised as a suburb named *Melrose Park*. At the height of Jimmy's fame in the thirties, the developers of this area, which was part of the *Golf Links Estate*, named it *Melrose Park*, and the streets after famous aviators. However, on October 25, 1946, Council met to receive deputations from bodies in the locality known as *Melrose*, regarding a change of name. The Council reported that, "at present the locality is known notionally by a variety of names but that *Melrose* is not acceptable." But still the locals clung to the name *Melrose*. On the 50th Anniversary of the Centenary Air Race a small reserve off Lancaster Street was officially named *Melrose Park*. The local Public School, founded in 1945, had also changed its name from *Walumetta* to *Melrose Park*. However, it wasn't until two years ago that the Geographic Names Board finally gave Sydney another suburb named for a pioneering Australian airman.....**John Scott**

AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW) INC.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR 12 MONTHS ENDED 31.12.00.

INCOME

	\$
Members' subscriptions	1575.00 ✓
Interest received	159.65 ✓
Miscellaneous	40.00 ✓
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$1774.65 ✓</b>

EXPENDITURE

Supper supplies	263.96 ✓
Gifts - guest speakers	151.84 ✓
State Govt. taxes	7.24 ✓
Public risk insurance	221.57 ✓
RAHS subscription	70.00 ✓
Donations:	
Australian Aviation Museum	250.00 ✓
HARS	250.00 ✓
B-24 Restoration Fund	250.00 ✓
Prizes - Trivia/arcft recognn night	49.80 ✓
Photocopying	16.60
Postage	12.15
Incorporation of Society	117.00
Miscellaneous	4.25
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>\$1664.41 ✓</b>

SURPLUS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE

\$110.24 ✓

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31.12.00.

ASSETS

	\$
Cash at Bank - Current Account	2534.55 ✓
NRMA Term Deposit	3500.00 ✓
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$6034.55 ✓</b>

LIABILITIES

Nil

NETT ASSETS

\$6034.55 ✓

ACCUMULATED FUNDS

Balance 1.1.00	5924.31 ✓
add surplus for year	110.24

TOTAL ACCUMULATED FUNDS

\$6034.55 ✓

Audited as correct  
16/01/01 *[Signature]*

# KC135 Fuselage Pressure Test Explosion

*Result of a "failed" pressure test on a KC135. Better to find out on the ground than at 35,000 feet...*

Thanks to all who responded with information on this very preventable "disaster".



"This is an example of what happens when we do not pay attention to detail, and do not follow instructions and checklists!

A KC-135 Aircraft was being pressurized at ground level. The outflow valves which are used to regulate the pressure of the aircraft were capped off during a 5 year overhaul and never opened back up. The post-investigation revealed: that a civilian depot technician who, "had always done it that way," was using a homemade gauge, and no procedure.

The technician's gauge didn't even have a max "peg" for the needle and so it was no surprise he missed it when the needle went around the gauge the first time. As the technician continued to pressurize the aircraft, and as the needle was on its second trip around the gauge the aircraft went "boom" - the rear hatch was blown over 70 yards away, behind a blast fence!

An incident like this is never funny and is further regrettable when we consider that this mistake is one that we (the taxpayers) will end up paying for. Fortunately, no one was reported as being injured.

This was a good "Lessons Learned" for making sure we have trained people, who have the right tools, and who are following detailed procedures. And it should serve as a reminder that just because you've always done it that way, it does not make it the "right" way! "

*Excerpted from military "lessons learned" presentation.*

# AirDisaster.Com

"A must see website for every airline passenger."

- USA TODAY

AD INFO



## AirDisaster.Com Accident Database

> [Accident Database](#) > [By Manufacturer/Type](#) > TU-104

Date	Airline/Location	Aircraft Type/Registration	Fatalities
<u>08.15.1958</u>	Aeroflot Chita, Russia	Tupolev TU-104A Not Available	64:64
<u>10.17.1958</u>	Aeroflot Kanas, Russia	Tupolev TU-104A Not Available	80:80
<u>06.30.1952</u>	Aeroflot Krasnoyarsk, USSR	Tupolev TU-104A SSSR-42340	84:84
<u>09.02.1962</u>	Aeroflot Khabarovsk, USSR	Tupolev TU-104A SSSR-42366	86:86
<u>10.25.1962</u>	Aeroflot Moscow, Russia	Tupolev TU-104B SSSR-42495	10:10
<u>07.13.1963</u>	Aeroflot Irkutsk, Russia	Tupolev TU-104B SSSR-42492	35:35
<u>07.25.1971</u>	Aeroflot Irkutsk, Russia	Tupolev TU-104B SSSR-42405	97:126
<u>10.13.1971</u>	Aeroflot Moscow, Russia	Tupolev TU-104B SSSR-42490	20:20
<u>05.25.1973</u>	Aeroflot Chita, Siberia	Tupolev TU-104A Not Available	100:100
<u>09.30.1973</u>	Aeroflot Sverdlovsk, Russia	Tupolev TU-104B SSSR-42506	108:108
<u>10.13.1973</u>	Aeroflot Domodedovo, Russia	Tupolev TU-104B SSR-42486	119:119
<u>12.08.1973</u>	Aeroflot Moscow, Russia	Tupolev TU-104B SSSR-42503	13:72
<u>02.09.1976</u>	Aeroflot Irkutsk, Russia	Tupolev TU-104A SSSR-42327	24:24
<u>11.28.1976</u>	Aeroflot Moscow, Russia	Tupolev TU-104B SSSR-42471	72:72
<u>01.13.1977</u>	Aeroflot Near Alma Ata, Kazakastan	Tupolev TU-104A SSSR-42369	96:96
<u>03.17.1979</u>	Aeroflot Moskva-Vnukovo, Russia	Tupolev TU-104B SSSR-42444	Not Avail



# AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW) Inc.

AHSA (NSW) Inc

ABN: 83 295 759 224

PO Box K346 Haymarket NSW 1238

## **Southern Skies**

The Newsletter of NSW Branch

May 2001 No.341

### **May Meeting**

Wednesday 2 May 2001, 7.45pm at the Powerhouse Museum. Enter from the Macarthur Street end and the meeting room is in the new area near the entrance. Visitors are most welcome and need not be accompanied by a member.

Our guest speaker will be AHSA (NSW) Committee Member, Bryan Clayton, whose topic will be:

### **The Role of the English Electric Canberra PR7 in RAF Service**

During his 20 years service in the RAF, Bryan was involved with many aircraft, and certainly one of the most interesting was the Canberra. Bryan's talk is sure to include many fascinating anecdotes and operational aspects of this aircraft.

### **Committee Meeting**

A Committee meeting, commencing at 6.30pm, will be held prior to the May meeting.

### **April Meeting**

The meeting featured the Aviation Trivia and Aircraft Recognition competitions. The Trivia competition was compered by quizmaster Keith Hudson who provided an excellent set of questions, some fairly straightforward, but many which tested the minds of the most ardent historians.

The competition included questions on individuals such as Arthur Butler, Lawrence Wackett, G.U. "Scotty" Allen and Nancy Bird, and the aircraft they designed or flew. After close scrutiny of the answers by the judges, the winner was Ian Dolstra, who took home the coveted Slipstream Trophy as well as a valuable book prize.

For those who did not attend, the following are a sample of the questions. Answers will be provided in next month's issue of *Southern Skies*.

1. What was the registration of the first aircraft to fly from the USA to Australia?
2. Who was its first owner?
3. Who was the Australian aircraft designer who became a prominent manufacturer of

light aircraft in England in the 1930s and 1940s?

4. Name a civil low wing and a post-war military trainer designed by this person.
5. Name another Australian aircraft designer who was a cousin of the person in question (3).

The Aircraft Recognition competition was conducted in a slightly different form than in previous years, by way of a group of members each providing a small selection of aircraft slides. This led to an interesting variety of subjects, albeit with a few duplications, and especially an eye-catching glimpse of a BAe146. Some of the other exotic types featured were the Lockheed Constitution, Breguet Deux Ponts/Sahara, Saab Safir, Martin 404 and Bird Innovator (which is a four-engined Catalina). The winner of the Brian White Memorial Trophy was Warwick Bigsworth with Eric Favelle the runner-up, and Jack Powell taking home the President's Trophy.

### **London to Sydney Centenary of Federation Air Race.**

The Air Race, which commenced from Biggin Hill, England on March 11, completed its competitive section in Coolangatta on Thursday March 5. Competitors then flew on to Bankstown on Saturday 7 April with a fly-past over Sydney Harbour on the way. The well-publicised Grumman Albatross landed on Double Bay and taxied down the Harbour to the Bridge, much to the consternation of the water police and port authorities. Fortunately, Prime Minister John Howard "pardoned" the offenders, much to the consternation of CASA. No doubt other matters have since taken a higher priority on CASA's agenda.

Winners in the speed section on handicap were James D'Arcy, Mike Miller, Mark Graham and John D'Arcy from Hong Kong flying a Piper Aerostar "Spirit of Kai-Tak", with Tim Ellison and Mark Wilkinson from the United Kingdom flying a Beechcraft Bonanza second and Jennifer Murray and Colin Bodill flying a Robinson helicopter third.

Of particular note was Tim Ellison, who has been a paraplegic since crash-landing his RAF Harrier some years ago. Winners of the precision flying section were Australians Michael Eastwood, Ray Eastwood, Rex Myers and Warren Myers, flying a Partenavia P68C.

The public was able to inspect the aircraft on arrival at Bankstown, with an open day featuring an air display on the following day. Various aircraft from HARS were also on display.

### **On the Internet**

Some time ago I mentioned the Arizona Spotters Page. This group has joined with other enthusiasts to provide Cactus Wings (<http://cactuswings.tripod.com>), which features pages of information about all those aircraft stored in the Arizona desert, plus lots more.

I have also previously mentioned the Air Disaster site, which provides no-nonsense reporting of aircraft accidents. Another site on a similar theme and well worthy of a look is Plane Crash Info ([www.planecrashinfo.com](http://www.planecrashinfo.com)). It provides very recent news on aircraft accidents, statistics, famous deaths by aircraft accident and more.

Following the Annual General Meeting of AHSA (NSW) in March, a video of the Pima County Air and Space Museum was shown. For those who want more information on this famous museum, their website ([www.pimaair.org](http://www.pimaair.org)) provides everything you want to know on the museum and its aircraft.

Remember Pan American? Well the Remember Pan-Am Historical Site ([www.panam.org/default.asp](http://www.panam.org/default.asp)) will bring back many memories of this once great airline.

ADF Aircraft Serial Numbers ([www.adf-serials.com](http://www.adf-serials.com)) is a site prepared by Darren Crick and sets out to compile the serial numbers for every aircraft in service with the Australian Defence Forces from 1921 through to the present. The site also includes a directory of non-ADF warbirds in Australia and a selection of visiting military aircraft at airshows.

The forerunner of the RAAF was the Australian Flying Corps. The website Australian Flying Corps 1914-19 (<http://members.nbci.com/XMCM/pointcook/index.htm>) constructed by Cameron Riley provides a detailed account of its operational and military history.

### **Calendar of Events**

6 June 2001 AHSA meeting guest speaker Jack Curtis, former airline pilot

June 2001 Official opening Australian Aviation Museum Bankstown (exact date to be advised)

29 – 30 September 2001 RAAF 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Air Show Amberley Queensland – also featuring the USAF Thunderbirds

6 – 8 October 2001 Warbirds over Scone. Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> practice day and muster; Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> air show; Monday 8<sup>th</sup> recovery and departure.

21 October 2001 Australian Aerial Patrol Open Day, Albion Park Aerodrome NSW.

### **Vale**

Noted aviation historian Terry Gwynn-Jones died in Brisbane on March 28, 2001 as a result of cancer. He was born in England in 1933 and after leaving school began a career in journalism. He joined the RAF in 1951 and resigned in 1956 to take up a position in the Royal Canadian Air Force where he worked as a flying instructor training NATO pilots. Following work as a company pilot he joined the RAAF as an instructor at Pearce in 1965 and later joined the Department of Civil Aviation as an Examiner of Airmen. In 1975, along with Denys Dalton, he set a round-the-world speed record for piston-engined aircraft of 122 hours, 15 minutes in a Beechcraft Duke.

Perhaps he was best known by fellow aviation historians as the author of 17 books, mostly on aviation and was a visiting fellow at the National Air and Space Museum at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC.

### **Wanted**

Keith White is seeking information on Australian, British and American Units stationed at Bankstown during WWII

### **News**

Ken Garland 02 4655 3383

Warwick Bigsworth 02 9872 2323

Why not contribute to this newsletter? If you have a particular interest and you think others may be interested, please let us know by simply jotting it down and posting to PO Box 777 Camden NSW 2570, fax 03 4655 3363 or Email to [garlandk@ideal.net.au](mailto:garlandk@ideal.net.au). We have the ability to reproduce documents or photographs in a number of formats.

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## LOOPS AND LANDINGS

Inspired by John Kingsford-Smith

### MY FAVOURITE MARTIAN

Dave Prossor, in his *Warbirds, Vintage & Veteran* column in *Australian Aviation*, April 2001, informs us that the two Martin Mars flying boats, used until recently for fire fighting in British Columbia, have been grounded. There is now speculation about their future, although the operators, Forest Industries Flying Tankers, have expressed an interest in donating one to the local community of Port Alberni on Vancouver Island as a museum piece. For me this would be a wonderful outcome.

In the fall of 1957 I found myself at Port Alberni reporting for work on the Ash River Hydro Electric Development, which was located nearby. My boss, Jack Dyson, was resident engineer for the project and, with his wife Mary, had found temporary accommodation not far from the town on the shores of Sproat Lake, one of the world's beautiful places. Sproat Lake was subsequently chosen as the base for the last remaining Martin Mars flying boats.

The Ash River Development was commissioned by B.C. Electric to provide power for MacMillan Bloedel, a company operating a large pulp and paper mill at Port Alberni. Access to the construction site was by logging roads through timber leases owned by MacMillan Bloedel, and with the frequency of devastating forest fires at the time, vehicle movement through the timber leases was strictly controlled. At times, during the summer of 1958, a security escort was required and occasionally access by road was prohibited. When this occurred, the artificial lake, then being created by the new dam, was used to escape the construction camp by chartered float plane.

Through the kindness of Jack and Mary Dyson, I spent many happy hours at Sproat Lake. In fact Jack and Mary had fallen so much under its spell that, when work on the Ash River was finished, they decided to stay permanently on its shores. After I returned to Australia I kept in touch and read with envy their letters giving news of the lake, Port Alberni and the large flying boats that had arrived to share Sproat Lake with them. In 1994 I returned to visit Mary and was able to see the Hawaii Mars and Philippine Mars for the first time myself. Last Christmas Mary sent a copy of the local newspaper *Islander* containing news of the uncertain fate of these two historic aircraft.

If there is anything that strikes a chord with most warbird preservationists, it is a tale about some long past opportunity to buy a perfectly sound aircraft at a give away price. Such opportunities abounded when thousands of military aircraft and associated spares, were disposed of at the end of WWII. For example, Bryan Monkton, in last year's Arthur Butler Lecture, *The Boats That Flew*, told us how he acquired five Sunderland flying boats, with substantial spares, after a visit to Rathmines in 1946. Wal Morley and Joe Palmer, in partnership, are reputed to have bought surplus military aircraft from the Dept of Supply, including fifty Liberators, fifty Mosquitos, eighteen Catalinas and four Hudsons, plus several hundred tons of engines, spares, props and accessories. In the same vein, I quote from Darrell Ohs' article in the *Islander*.

"One day in the spring of 1959, by chance he, (Dan McIvor, an ex-RCAF pilot then flying for MacMillan Bloedel), heard of the U.S. Navy's disposal of the Mars fleet. McIvor called the base commander immediately, only to learn that the planes had been sold at auction just one day earlier. The successful bidder turned out to be a local scrap dealer who had just picked up four fully operational aircraft, originally worth \$3.5 million each, for \$23,650 the lot, or \$73 a ton.

The C.O. gave McIvor the scrap dealer's phone number and upon contacting him the new owner proposed selling the planes for \$100,000 all gassed up and ready to fly to Victoria. Upon McIvor's return with the proposal to MacBlo's head office, management turned the whole project

down. Crestfallen but not crushed, he later worked day and night compiling an exhaustive report that finally convinced management to purchase the aircraft on behalf of a consortium yet to be formed.

Now in charge of the care and maintenance of the Mars squadron, McIvor scrambled around the Alameda Naval Station, picking up spare parts and equipment at flea market prices. For example, the station supply officer offered him 35 new engines worth a minimum of \$50,000 each for \$300 a piece. Also a stack of crates 20ft wide, 10ft high and 200ft long, holding an estimated \$2.5 million worth of spare parts. McIvor meekly offered \$3,200 for this lot. Sold! Later the squadron engineering office rolled out an army of 44 filing cabinets containing the entire technical history : blue prints, maintenance records, templates and memorabilia.

In the summer of 1959, the four planes flew north to Patricia Bay, where Fairey Aviation would perform the conversion to flying tankers. The Marianas Mars, the prototype water bomber, went into service in 1960."

Of the four flying boats acquired by Dan McIvor in 1959, two have been lost. Marianas Mars crashed while fighting a forest fire at Northwest Bay on June 6, 1961. Caroline Mars was damaged beyond repair while ashore on her beaching gear during a hurricane on October 12, 1962. It would be fitting if one of the remaining flying boats was preserved at Port Alberni as a memorial to all aircrew lost during fire fighting operations. Surely the other will find a home with the Glenn L. Martin Aviation Museum, which is located at the Martin State Airport near Baltimore, Maryland.

The following is quoted from the museum's web site. "Glenn Luther Martin was born at Macksburg, Iowa, on January 17, 1886. At the early age of six years, he evidenced the acumen which was to stamp him a man of accomplishment throughout his career. He built and sold box kites in his neighborhood better than anyone else. He used the floor of his mother's kitchen for a factory--and sold his kites for twenty-five cents each!"

I really don't think that the six year old was quite that precocious because Lawrence Hargrave himself didn't start experimenting with box kites until early 1893, and presented his first paper on cellular kites to the Royal Society of New South Wales on June 7, 1893. Nevertheless, as a boy, Glenn Martin became interested in aviation when he read of the experiments of Octave Chanute and Samuel Pierpont Langley. Therefore, his knowledge of box kites certainly did come, albeit indirectly, from Lawrence Hargrave, who should at least be given credit for launching the young Glenn Martin on his life long career of making things that flew.

Glenn Martin built his first aircraft, a 30hp pusher biplane, in 1909. In the 1930's Martin branched out into the building of four engined flying boats, culminating in the beautiful M-130 Clippers flown by Pan Am on its trans Pacific services. With WWII looming, Glenn Martin conceived his *Sky Battleship*, a huge four engined flying boat named for the ancient Roman God of war, Mars. He drove the first rivet in the keel of the prototype on August 20, 1940. When the type entered production its role had changed to that of transport.

At the time of Glenn Martin's death in December 1955, Martin Aircraft proclaimed that they were *The Builders of Dependable Aircraft Since 1909*. But since the late forties the vision of the company had been increasingly towards unmanned aircraft, guided missiles and space probes. During the late sixties the company became the Aerospace Division of Martin- Marietta and since 1995 it has merged with Lockheed Martin. For many years the name Martin has been linked with NASA and its exploration of the planet Mars. NASA's latest mission to Mars, *2001 Mars Odyssey*, was launched from Cape Canaveral on April 7. The industrial partner for the project is Lockheed Martin Astronautics.

Lawrence Hargrave, who spent some time in the early years of his married life as an assistant at the Sydney Observatory, would be fascinated by all of this, particularly if he knew of the role of his box kite in the early motivation of the young Glenn Martin.....**John Scott.**



# AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW) Inc.

AHSA (NSW) Inc

ABN: 83 295 759 224

PO Box K346 Haymarket NSW 1238

## Southern Skies

The Newsletter of NSW Branch

June 2001 No.342

### June Meeting

Wednesday 6 June 2001, 7.45pm at the Powerhouse Museum. Enter from the Macarthur Street end and the meeting room is in the annex area near the entrance. Visitors are most welcome and need not be accompanied by a member. Supper will be available after the meeting.

Our guest speaker will be Jack Curtis, whose topic will be;

#### Personal experiences in aviation, with particular reference to the DC3

Jack served with the RAAF for over 3 years, with TAA for 35 years, in general aviation for 14 years and is still flying as a check and training captain on DC3s with Dakota National Air. Please join us to be entertained by one of the true characters in Australian aviation.

### May Meeting

Guest speaker was Committee member, Bryan Clayton who discussed the role of the Canberra PR7 in RAF service. Not only did Bryan provide many interesting facts about this very special aircraft, but he also related numerous anecdotes about his service life.

The Canberra first flew in 1949 and yet about six of the PR7 version are still in RAF service and are expected to remain so until 2003. It is envisaged that their role will eventually be taken over by the Uninhabited Air Vehicle (UAV), perhaps of a type like the Global Hawk, which recently flew non-stop from Edwards AFB California to RAAF Base Edinburgh. Despite the end of the Cold War, photo-reconnaissance is still alive and well; in the USA, Lockheed Martin is understood to be refurbishing a number of U-2s. The recent events close to China and Taiwan will only increase this need.

The PR7 carries a crew of two consisting of pilot and navigator, although during Bryan's association with the aircraft, an additional crew member was occasionally carried to assist with photo-reconnaissance duties and to keep a lookout for "unfriendlies". The aircraft is powered by 2 Rolls Royce Avons of 7,400lb s.t. and has a maximum take-off weight of approximately 54,000lb, about half of which is fuel. Bryan noted that the cockpit would not meet today's OH&S standards; it seemed to be designed specifically for the chief test pilot who had short arms and long legs, but was less than ideal for any other pilot.

The glass canopy ensured that the cockpit became incredibly hot, particularly in the Middle East theatre of operations.

The Canberra PR9 incorporated an increased wingspan, improvements to the cockpit and was powered by RR Avons of 10,500lb s.t. However the increased complexities of this model necessitated its retirement well before the PR7 version.

The Martin B57 was a licence built version for use by the USAF, and later Pakistan and Taiwan, and incorporated many improvements, particularly associated with cockpit design and air conditioning as well as utilizing Wright J65 turbojets. The ultimate US version was the General Dynamics RB57 series, which had a much larger wing, used Pratt & Whitney engines of more than 11,000lb s.t. and was able to operate at altitudes well in excess of 60,000 feet.

Bryan served 20 years in the RAF, initially as a flying instructor on Vampires and Meteors before transferring to 13 Squadron flying Canberra PR7s based in Cyprus. Duties included photo-reconnaissance and aerial mapping, with tasks assigned over a wide area of the Middle East and North Africa. He noted that the ruggedness of the aircraft enabled it to operate from compressed sand runways, lined with used engine oil in Sharjah, and cope with the extreme temperatures, sand and dust in the rest of the Middle East. His aircraft were not armed, but did carry flares, which were considered highly dangerous and were thought to have caused several accidents. In due course, the requirement to carry flares was withdrawn.

On return to Great Britain and further flying duties, Bryan subsequently transferred to the Logistics Section where, in time-honoured tradition, he was posted back to the Middle East. Bryan's talk went on to include many fascinating memories of these experiences. On retirement from the RAF he migrated to Australia and worked for some 25 years with Hawker de Havilland, but that will be another story.

#### Trivia Quiz Answers

1. 1985
2. Sir Hubert Wilkins
3. Edgar Percival
- 4a. Percival Gull, or Mew Gull, or Gull 6, or Vega Gull, or Proctor;
- 4b. Percival Prentice
5. George Wikner

### On the Internet

Have you ever wanted to know the type or owner of an American registered aircraft? The Aircraft Register Inquiry site (<http://162.58.35.241/acdatabase/>) will keep you occupied for hours. The databases include owner, type, engine type, serial number references, and obviously includes a wealth of material for research and general interest.

Marc Schaeffer's Home Page ([www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/Lab/8803/index.htm](http://www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/Lab/8803/index.htm)) features commercial aircraft orders, commercial aircraft data and a very comprehensive section on the de Havilland Comet. The aircraft orders section includes current, past and expected orders.

Perhaps the most comprehensive website about airliners is Airliners.Net ([www.airliners.net](http://www.airliners.net)). It features thousands of airliner and military photographs, news, books and collectables.

The Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia is renowned throughout the world. Its website ([www.rfds.org.au](http://www.rfds.org.au)) features information on all Sections, and the history, people, aircraft and areas of responsibility of this great organisation.

Brisbane Airport Online ([www.brisbaneairport.net](http://www.brisbaneairport.net)) is an enthusiast's site that will entertain those interested in Queensland aviation. It specializes in matters germane to Brisbane Airport, such as airport maps, SIDS and STARS, news, photo gallery and movements and also includes a VH- registration "find" section.

Scramble Magazine is the journal of the Dutch Aviation Society, whose site at ([www.scramble.nl/](http://www.scramble.nl/)) has a great amount of European aviation information. The site is a bit cumbersome, but one of the interesting sections is Stoffer and Blik, which is about aircraft accidents and is accessed through the combined civil and military section.

### For the Bookshelf

*Bushies – A History of Bush Pilots Airways and Air Queensland* – by Ron Entsch. (ISBN 0-646-41241-8). During the 1950s the development of airlines flourished, particularly in rural Australia. One of the more interesting of these small airlines was Bush Pilots Airways, affectionately known as Bushies. It was founded in 1951 by local Cairns businesspeople and western graziers, and gradually grew to cover a route structure from Goondiwindi to Horn Island, and west to the Northern Territory. Its name changed to Air Queensland to more properly reflect its customer base, but met its demise in 1988.

The book describes where it all began at Cairns Airport, and traces the development of the company including medical and communications services, flying surgeon and air ambulance activities, charter operations including those to Nauru and West Irian, the upgrading of airline services and plenty of historical facts interspersed with human interest stories. One section that will warrant attention

in light of the current airline take-overs is the company's relationships with Ansett and TAA and the challenges to the then Two-Airline Policy.

Ron Entsch joined Bushies as Assistant Company Secretary in 1959 and remained with the airline until he resigned from his position of Group General Manager in 1984. He continued work in the aviation industry as General Manager Operations for East West Airlines and eventually as General Operations Manager for Ansett until his retirement in 1996.

The book will be formally launched on 23 June at Cairns Airport, and will be available through Walker's Bookshop in Cairns. Details are available on Walker's website at ([www.walkersbookshop.com.au](http://www.walkersbookshop.com.au)), via which purchases can be made. RRP \$32.95 plus P&P. We have arranged for a bulk order from the author, and copies will be available in Sydney for \$32.95. If you live in Sydney and would like to order a copy, please complete the attached order form and enclose \$10 deposit (cheque made out to Aviation Historical Society of Australia (NSW) Inc).

### Calendar of Events

- 26 August 2001 Narrabri Airshow
- 28 August – 2 September 2001 DH-82 Tiger Moth International 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday Bash, Caboolture Qld
- 31 August – 2 September 2001 Festival of Flight, Caboolture Aerodrome Queensland
- 8/9 September 2001 Caboolture Air Spectacular, Caboolture Aerodrome Queensland
- 29 – 30 September 2001 RAAF 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Air Show Amberley Queensland – also featuring the USAF Thunderbirds
- 29 – 30 September 2001 Warbirds over Scone. Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> practice day and muster; Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> air show. (Note changed dates and conflict with Amberley!)
- 14 October 2001 Nowra Air Show
- 21 October 2001 Australian Aerial Patrol Open Day, Albion Park Aerodrome NSW.
- 4 November 2001 Camden Air Show

### Vale

Members will be sorry to hear of the passing of Ted Wixted on May 17, 2001. Ted was a noted historian who was passionate in his search for the cause of the accidents that claimed the lives of Bert Hinkler and Sir Charles Kingsford Smith. He was a past curator of the aviation collection in the Queensland Museum and was instrumental in finding and acquiring Bert Hinkler's Avro Baby, which is now displayed in that museum. He wrote several books including "Queensland Aviation – From the Ground Up", "The North-West Aerial Frontier 1919 – 1934" and several other papers and books on Hinkler and Smithy. In recent years he featured in a television documentary on the "mystery" surrounding the Bert Hinkler's crash in Italy.

## LOOPS AND LANDINGS

Inspired by John Kingsford-Smith

### P.D. - Part 1

On Tuesday May 9, at the Royal Exhibition Building in Melbourne, representatives of the Australian community gathered to celebrate the centenary of the Australian Parliament. During the ceremony twenty eight individuals, chosen as 20th Century *Australian Achievers*, were presented to the gathering. The aviation achievers, Sir Charles Kingsford Smith and John Flynn, were introduced by Nancy Bird Walton. For all members of AHSA (NSW) Inc., this was a proud moment. Her personal connection with both Smithy and John Flynn is well known. Smithy gave Nancy her first flying lesson. The Rev. John Flynn, who had begged her to give up flying in the harsh outback, officiated at her marriage to John Walton on December 16, 1939. Nancy herself is a *National Living Treasure* and her continuing energetic promotion of Australia's aviation heritage, at home and abroad, is an inspiration.

Located adjacent to the Royal Exhibition Building, the new Melbourne Museum has picked up the aviation heritage theme for its Federation exhibition, *Forging the Nation*, by including the Parer-McIntosh DH9, P.D. The exhibition opened on March 3, and will continue until June 3 before touring regional centres in Victoria.

This historic aircraft, the first single engined machine to fly from England to Australia, is on loan to Victoria from the Australian War Memorial. There are many in my home town, Bathurst NSW, who believe P.D. should be permanently located there, housed in a dedicated memorial building.

Bathurst played a prominent part in the prelude to Federation and, because of the proclamation of Bathurst by Governor Macquarie at the site on May 7, 1815, there has been the tradition of an Autumn Heritage Festival centred around this date. Thus there was a particular coincidence with the celebrations in Melbourne this year. The appearance of P. D. in Melbourne at this time has rubbed a little salt into old wounds. Bathurst has had a connection with the Parer family from the time Ray was a student at St Stanislaus College from 1911 to 1912. It has had a claim on P.D. since it was given custody of the aircraft in 1965 by the then Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies. Bathurst City Council has only recently, in the last couple of years, given up on the claim.

My own memories of St Stanislaus College include being almost mauled to death by the *Stannies* First XIII in the late forties, nearly freezing to death in the college chapel at a winter wedding in 1962, and, during a work related visit in the late sixties, discovering P. D. in an open sided shed near the hand ball courts. How did it come to be there? To answer this question a little background is required. There are three men and an aeroplane credited with what can only be described as the miraculous first, single engined flight from Enland to Australia, which departed Hounslow on January 8, and arrived Darwin seven months later on August 2, 1920.

Ray Parer, after his time at *Stannies*, continued his education at St Francis Xavier's College, Melbourne. He enlisted in the AIF in 1916 and, because he demonstrated practical skills in engineering, particularly with work he was doing on an aero engine of his own design, he was posted to the Australian Flying Corps at Point Cook. His flying instructor assessed him as an outstanding student, but he failed to impress his theory examiners. His medical examiners also had some reservations. He was at the point of being returned to his unit as a private when his own persistent representations led to him being commissioned and sent to England for further training with the RFC. There, despite being marked unfit for combat flying due to his medical report, he became a brilliant test and ferry pilot.

John Cowe McIntosh arrived in Fremantle from Scotland as a 17 year old in 1909. After five

years working as a sleeper cutter in the karri forests near Bridgetown WA, he enlisted in the AIF and, on December 31, 1914, sailed off to WWI as a member of the 4th Field Ambulance, in which he served at Gallipoli and in France. In 1917 he applied for transfer to the Australian Flying Corps, but it wasn't until November 1918 that he was asked to report for training. Although he was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant, on probation, in the Australian Flying Corps, on April 1, 1919, he had not progressed to flying training. In fact, up to the time he met Ray Parer, he had been airborne only once.

Parer and McIntosh met by chance in October 1919 at Sutton Veny, a military camp near Salisbury Plain, then holding Australian troops awaiting repatriation. They were, at first glance, an odd couple: Parer, a short, olive skinned, lightly built introvert of Spanish descent; McIntosh, a tall, handsome, well built outgoing Scot. Ray Parer was motivated by the prize of £10,000 offered by the Australian Government for the first successful flight from England to Australia by Australian aviators, and had been trying unsuccessfully to get involved. He chose McIntosh as a partner, for skills he knew he would need, but lacked himself. It seemed to him that McIntosh would be a good organiser and negotiator, just the business partner he needed.

The partnership immediately bore fruit, because it was through a friend of McIntosh that an approach was made to the Scottish distilling millionaire, Peter Dawson, to sponsor the flight. Peter Dawson Ltd., Distillers, was established at Dufftown, Scotland, in 1802 with offices opened later in Glasgow. Peter Dawson carried the name of his grandfather who founded the business. At the time of WWI the company letterhead noted it was, "By Appointment to His Majesty the King of Spain" and, "Purveyors to the House of Lords". Peter Dawson was known to have a high regard for Australians, he had agents in Sydney, Brisbane, Toowoomba, Adelaide and Fremantle. He was soon won over by McIntosh, and at a later meeting, by Parer. After the first meeting with Peter Dawson, Parer had selected an F.E.2b for the flight. Later, when Parer wisely had second thoughts, Peter Dawson agreed to finance the extra cost of a DH9.

Although Peter Dawson had refused Ray Parer's offer to carry some form of advertising on the DH9, Parer decided to have the characteristic P. D. initials painted large on both sides of the fuselage as a mark of appreciation. Strangely, the initials used on the Peter Dawson Ltd Logo were P. D. Q., and Peter Dawson often placed these initials after his signature as an abbreviation for Peter Dawson Quick, or pretty damn quick, to describe the service offered to his wholesalers. As it turned out if P. D. Q. had been applied to the DH9, instead of just P. D., it may have become a sour joke. The bottle of whisky that Peter Dawson asked Parer and McIntosh to deliver to the Australian Prime Minister, Billy Hughes, probably took longer to reach its destination than any previous consignment!

The DH9, serial number F1278, selected by Ray Parer was one of a batch of 200 built under licence in mid 1918 by Waring & Gillow, Cambridge. It then passed to the Aircraft Disposal Board's surplus depot at Waddon, near Croydon, where it joined the team of Parer, McIntosh and Dawson. On payment of £900, it became the property of Peter Dawson, and was placed on the civil register as G-EAQM. Ray Parer had just taken the DH9 for a successful test flight when news of the arrival of the Vickers Vimy, G-EAOU, at Darwin on December 10, 1919, reached him. The England Australia Air Race had been won. The planned flight by Parer and McIntosh was now viewed in a different light by the British Air Ministry and the Australian authorities. But Peter Dawson remained firmly loyal to what would now be an even more risky adventure, outside of the support network provided for the earlier air race contestants. Finally, without the blessing of the Australian authorities, Parer and McIntosh departed Hounslow on January 8, 1920, heading P. D. into overcast conditions and to their first forced landing in France.

Next month I will pick up the story of P. D. from the time it left Sydney for Bathurst on Friday August 26, 1920, and explain why we Bathurstians think it should still be there.....**John Scott.**

# *Commuter Line*

## Beech 18

The aircraft which really set Beech on the road to success was the Model 18 "Twin Beech". On January 15, 1937 the Beechcraft Model 18 (NC15810 c/n 62) made its maiden flight at the Beechcraft Factory in Wichita, Kansas, and it continued in production for thirty-two years. The all metal, low wing, twin engine monoplane was originally intended as a six-to-eight passenger executive transport or feederliner. The Beech 18, however was adapted to many uses, in all, thirty two different versions were produced. The Model 18 was a bold move on the part of Walter Beech considering there was virtually no home market for the aircraft. Air transport in the United States was main line operations and few regional lines existed.

The versatility of the Model 18, however, quickly became accepted by overseas and charter operators, especially in Canada as it could be operated on interchangeable ski or float landing gear. The Model 18's impressive performance also impressed the business community and soon orders were flowing in from Alaska, Canada and Puerto Rico.

In 1939 Beech negotiated a contract with the US Government for a photoreconnaissance version, designated Type F-2 and as a result, fourteen were ordered under the Emergency Procurement Program. This order was followed by eleven C-45 personnel transports.

Later that year Beech began negotiations with the Chinese Government for a bomber trainer. This version had a clear Perspex nose, a single gun turret in the upper fuselage and a machine gun in a tunnel in the rear floor. The aircraft was also equipped with internal bomb racks which carried up to twenty 25-pound bombs.

The onset of World War II brought more orders for the military versions of the Model 18, both from the US and overseas Governments. The Model AT-7 was used for navigation training, and the AT-11 was an advanced trainer for bombardiers. The US Navy SNB-1 was similar to the AT-11, the SNB-2 to the AT-7. The JRB-1 was a radio-control aeroplane for target or drone aircraft. The Navy's personnel transports similar to the C-45 were known as JRB-2, JRB-3 and JRB-4.

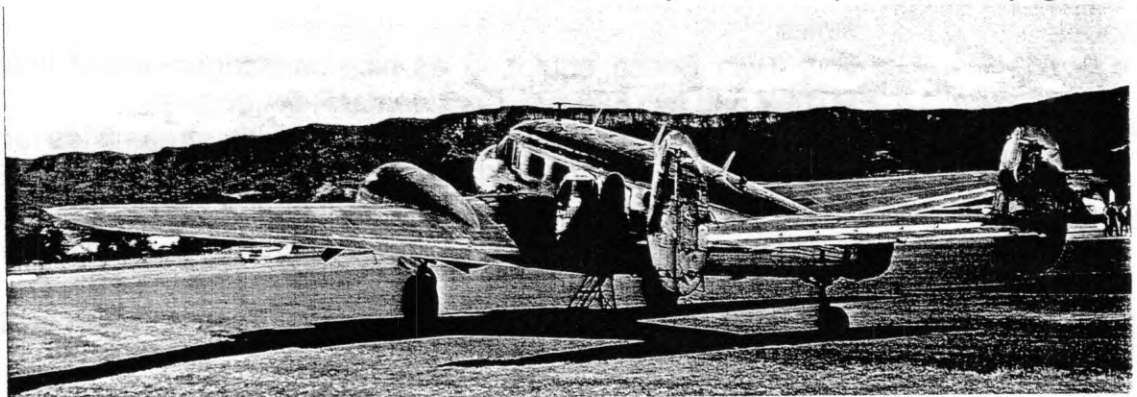
The last three production aircraft were delivered in November 1969. More than 9,000 Model 18 had been produced since 1937. The Model 18 has been modified almost beyond recognition, mods. Include tri-cycle undercarriage, ski, twin floats, turbine engines, lengthened fuselage, single fin, JATO bottles to name just a few.

### Postwar production.

Model:	Notes:
D18CT	D18 Twin Beech equipped as nine-passenger feeder liner with 9,450lb. MTOW and two 525 h.p. Continental R-9A engines.
D18S	Model 18S for postwar business use with streamlines engine nacelles, deluxe interior, 8,750 lb.MTOW and two 450 h.p. P&W R-985
E18S	D18S with higher and wider cabin, enlarged wings with square cambered tips, four enlarged windows, new windshield, pointed nose and 9,300 lb. MTOW
G18S	E18S with new cockpit and windshield, panoramic cabin centre window and 9,700 lb. MTOW
H18S	G18S with fully retracting mainwheels, electric cowl flaps and optional Volpar tricycle undercarriage.

Australian operators of Beech 18s include Thiess Bros., Melbourne Herald Group, Connellan Airways, Flinders Island Airways, Savage Air Services, Altair Aviation Australia, Alligator Airways, Helitrans, Eagle Airways and Macquarie Grove Flying School.

VH-ATX	Beech H18	BA-704	30/06/94 6/12/89 6/12/89	Mr R Mann Airtransit First Registered
VH-BJJ	Beech D18S			Connellan Airways
VH-CII	Beech E18-S	BA-371	16/06/00 16/06/00	Mr R Keys ex N753CW; V6-CAA; N753CW; N753C
VH-CIJ	Beech E18-S	BA-81	16/06/00 16/06/00	Mr R Keys ex N3781B
VH-CLF	Beech C18F		1/02/66	Damaged Connellan Airways
VH-CLG	Beech C18S		12/08/65	Accident Connellan Airways
VH-CLI	Beech D18S		1/03/60	Deleted WFU Connellan Airways ex ZK-BQE
VH-CRT	Beech D18S	A808	1/06/67 1/10/56	To VH-FIE Theiss Brothers (Qld) Pty Ltd
VH-FID	Beech D18S Expeditor	A-458	10/06/80	Mr M Long Flinders Island Airlines Melbourne Herald Group
VH-FIE	Beech D18S Expeditor	A-808	25/07/99 12/10/56	Tanamerah Investments Pty Ltd Mr J Love Flinders Island Airlines Melbourne Herald Group
VH-PDI	Beech H18		1/01/79 1/02/76	Eagle Airways Helitrans ex Japanese Airways
VH-SAU	Beech D18S Expeditor	A-499	31/12/96 1/01/87 2/08/73 16/11/64	Altair Aviation Australia Pty Ltd C Muir T/a Alligator Airways Crocodile Airways Savage Air Services ex B-1529 China Airlines ex B-215 Far Eastern Air Transport
VH-UWG	Beech D18S Expeditor	A-846	1/01/49	ex Nationalist Chinese Government To N52DN; Losave Pty Ltd T/a Macquarie Grove Flying School



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