



AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW) Inc

ABN: 83 295 759 224

PO Box K346 Haymarket NSW 1238

Southern Skies

The Newsletter of AHSA (NSW) Inc

July 2008 No.419

file 2008-2

July Meeting

The July meeting will be held at the Powerhouse Museum on Wednesday 2nd July 2008, at 7.45pm. Enter from the Macarthur Street end and the meeting room is adjacent to the foyer. Visitors are most welcome and supper will be available after the meeting.

The Guest Speaker for the evening will be Captain John Zarlenga, who will talk about

Recent Flying Experiences with Ryanair

John commenced his flying training with the Royal Aero Club of NSW in 1985. He is currently employed by Qantas as an Airbus A330 captain on international operations, flying to destinations such as Hong Kong, Beijing, Shanghai, Tokyo, Singapore, Mumbai, Auckland and Los Angeles. John, who has spent some 19 years with Qantas, has over 12,000 hours of flight experience and also owns a light twin engine Piper Aerostar.

John has also flown two separate contracts in Europe; in 1998 for Virgin Express as a B737-400 captain based in Brussels and in 2006 for Ryanair as a B737-800 captain based in Dublin. His talk will reflect on his enjoyable and challenging experiences with Ryanair.

Please join us for another interesting evening.

Committee Meeting

A Committee Meeting commencing at 6.30pm will be held immediately prior to the July meeting.

June Meeting

The June meeting consisted of a private viewing of the Museum of Sydney's exhibition, *Flying Boats - Sydney's Golden Age of Aviation*.

Our host for the evening was the Museum's Building Manager, Matthew Holle, who is also the guest curator of the exhibition.

Matthew spent over two years assembling the vast collection of memorabilia which is included in the exhibition. I'm sure all who attended were most impressed with the display which is depicted in several phases, including: the Empire air mail services pre-World War II; the war years; immediate

post-war times, the Trans Oceanic Airways period and growth of Pacific services; and the Ansett period.

There are many posters and images around the exhibition hall; a mock-up of a typical flying boat cabin along with on-board memorabilia, a Pegasus engine and a Hamilton Standard propeller. Many photographs have been supplied from a wide variety of sources, including the Qantas Historical Museum, Geoff Wilkes and AHSA (NSW) member Dudley Reynolds, as well as other items from the Powerhouse Museum, the Australian War Memorial and the Australian Aviation Museum Bankstown.

Unfortunately the Museum shop was not staffed, however members who visit the exhibition (again, for some) should find some interesting flying boat memorabilia during normal Museum hours.

Elly Beinhorn

The item on Elly Beinhorn in the May newsletter attracted interest from a number of readers. Eric Cunningham has kindly provided an extract from the May 1932 issue of *The Motor in Australia & Flying* (see p4). Eric advises that there appeared to be no accompanying article to the photo in this magazine.

New Book

Wings of Destiny - Wing Commander Charles Learmonth DFC and Bar, and the Air War in New Guinea by Charles Page

Published by Rosenberg, ISBN 9781877058646, \$35, paperback 416 pages, 88 b&w photos, 34 maps & diagrams. Now available, and can be ordered from all good bookshops, or from www.amazon.com/books or www.rosenbergpub.com.au.

Wings of Destiny takes us beyond Kokoda, and into the skies over New Guinea, and fills a significant gap in Australian World War II history.

From the idyllic "Carramar", the book follows Charles Learmonth through Geelong Grammar, pilot training at Point Cook, and posting to No. 14 Squadron, Pearce, Western Australia. It views life in wartime Australia, the air search for HMAS *Sydney*, and the air war in New Guinea.

According to *Wings* magazine, Charles was lucky to survive his first action: They still speak of

Squadron Leader Charles Learmonth's blitz on Buna camp. Flak shot away his starboard aileron wires, punctured his port tyre, damaged his elevators, and broke his rear gunner's arm. The ground crew counted 73 bullet holes in the Boston after it returned.

From his tent in New Guinea Charles wrote frequently to his brother John, who had fought in Greece and Crete before his capture. Charles was also an incurable romantic and wrote to his wife Marjorie almost every day. These letters, combined with his diaries and log book, take the reader back to those never to be forgotten war years. Yet, although a thread of romance runs through this book, the tragedies of war are not romanticised or glossed over.

Over the cloud wreathed mountains of New Guinea, the story follows Charles Learmonth in his Boston attack bomber, *She's Apples*. It observes the brave deeds of No. 22 Squadron and the 'Boston Boys' as they fight in the skies over Lae, Salamaua, the Bismarck Sea, and New Britain. The reader comes to know these airmen well, and mourns their loss when they are shot down, die brutally in captivity, or are killed in aircraft accidents.

Charles Learmonth completed 159 sorties with No. 22 Squadron, and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Bar for his service in New Guinea. His Citation stated: 'He has displayed tactical ability amounting to genius.'

After his return from New Guinea, Charles Learmonth was appointed Commanding Officer of No. 14 Squadron, Pearce. He was killed on 6 January 1944 when his Beaufort bomber crashed into the Indian Ocean near Perth. Before diving to his death, he radioed vital information that helped solve the mystery of the Beaufort accidents. In recognition of his bravery, an airfield in Western Australia was named in his honour. Today, Learmonth Airport is the alternate for Perth, and is the gateway to Exmouth, Ningaloo Reef, and Coral Bay.

This is a story that needed to be told, writes Page. 'The deeds of Charles Learmonth and the "Boston Boys" deserve more than a shoebox full of aerogrammes held together with rubber bands.

Charles Page is a retired Boeing 747 Captain with 15,000 hours of flying time. He is the author of an earlier volume of aviation history, *Vengeance of the Outback*.

From "The Sydney Magazine" – Peter FitzSimons

The following article appeared in a recent issue of The Sydney Magazine supplement to the SMH.

"Back in the old days, of course, racecourses were simply designed so that horses could run around in circles and flash past a winning post in enough order that punters could work out just who had lost

what to which bookie. These days, that design feature remains, but they now also come with enormous grandstands, winners' enclosures, sponsors' tents, facilities for television cameras and whatnot. There was an interim period however, back at the beginning of the last century, when racecourses were attractive not just to horses, punters and the beautiful people, but to things of an entirely different nature.

Rosehill Gardens is a prime example. Try to picture the scene, way back when, on that sparkling day in late April 1910. There is a buzz around the entire ground, because something extraordinary is about to happen. A man is going to fly. And not just any man – why, it is none other than Harry Houdini!

Dinkum, he will fly, the posters all over Sydney blare it. "Aviation Week at Rosehill Racecourse. Mr Harry Rickards, at enormous expense has arranged with the Great Houdini ... [to] positively fly, between the hours of 10am and midday."

No joke – he did it just last month down at Diggers rest, just north-west of Melbourne, making him, they reckon, the first man to fly in this country.

Roll up! Roll up! Just a shilling to see!

The crowds of Sydneysiders continue to roll in and the plane, a Voisin biplane, is rolled out from the canvas hangar at the northern end of the racecourse. That's him. That bloke now climbing into the plane must be Houdini himself. See, he's giving us a wave!

And now, someone else steps forward and grips the eight-foot long propeller. The motor coughs, catches, and suddenly roars out "like a thousand maniacs released".

Now Houdini guns it and in short order he is accelerating down the paddock, like a Melbourne Cup winner at full gallop. After just 50 yards, the real magic begins and he lifts off the ground! At this instant – as the paper reported the following day – "men tossed up their hats, women grew hysterical and wept for sheer excitement."

The plane circled a couple of times and then, as it landed, "a hundred men rushed towards the biplane, pulled the happy aviator from the seat, and carried him, shoulder high, mid deafening cheers and salvos".

Houdini continued to perform flights for the next week, before progressively larger crowds. Sydney was agog – and the age of aviation in this town had begun."

Acknowledgement to the Secret Life of Houdini: The Making of America's First Superhero, by William Kalush and Larry Sloman (Atria Books, 2006)

News from the North – Roy Fordham

Dear members, may I start by way of a little self indulgence on my part for this offering in your

newsletter, and my apologies to the original story writer, for re-arranging his story to facilitate the newsletter. May I also beg of some poetic license, within this true story, of a quite bizarre historic connection twixt early British history and little known settlement in Koonowla, South Australia.

Our story commences in the late 1890s in the rural English countryside County of Kent. The name of Biggin Hill, being quite insignificant in Merrye Olde England circa 1890, was later to become synonymous with the turning point in WWII history; intrigue starts.

The building of a beautiful home at Biggin Hill by two brothers, Walter Tothill, a viticulturist, and John Burne Tothill, an agriculturist, was later to be home for three different families; the last recorded family to live there being the Russell family.

The name of the house was "Koonowla". Why *Koonowla* will be revealed later, but to continue, Kate, Minnie Russell, died in 1911 and bequeathed the property to the Victoria Childrens' Hospital in Chelsea, England, as a convalescent home for sick children, with a 5,000 pounds endowment from stock held in India.

It is now a sad era in the story, for on the 10th of January 1917, it was subject to a compulsory purchase under the Defence of the Realm Act. By November 1921 the Treasury had not given the Chelsea Hospital any compensation for the use of the property, which was now dilapidated and could not be restored or refitted to its former condition due to the high cost. The Royal Flying Corps Officers, who had occupied the hospital, had little knowledge of the true situation.

The children never returned and by 1922, 4,500 pounds was paid for Koonowla House which became just another building on RAF Biggin Hill. The continued expansion of RAF Biggin Hill required further Officers quarters, with the land on the south east area of the airfield being an ideal site for such expansion, the two sites becoming Dowding Road and Koonowla Close. During 1979, together with the 1915 cottages in the area, the site was sold.

It was learned by the researcher of this story, that in 1892 John Burne Tothill, (an ex P&O Executive officer Dock Master Bombay India) had travelled to South Australia and was responsible for planting the first vines in Clare Valley, with such good results he purchased the land during 1897. His first and only child, Mary Tothill, was born at Koonowla 12th June 1897. Koonowla wine had been exported to England from around 1900 until 1926 when a tragic fire destroyed most of the stock and cellars.

Wine production continued for the next twenty years but slowly reduced the area to make way for more profitable grain and wool production, until 8

acres of Cabernet Sauvignon was planted in 1985 heralding the recommencement of Koonowla Wine as a bottle label.

And so it was after much research by the author, Mr. Joseph J Merchant, both in India and Australia, that it was learned that during 1897 John Burne Tothill applied the name to his vineyard, Koonowla; the same time that his brother, Walter, named the house at Biggin Hill in England. It took a lot of further research to identify the meaning of the indigenous translation. Finally, it is believed the meaning of Koonowla comes from the Ngadjuri language for the river, the name of that area by the water.

To the present, and the current owners of Koonowla who have completed the restoration of Koonowla Cottage, buildings and vineyards and establishing new plantings, much of which is in full production covering the same area as that of 1899, with a further 129 acres planned for the future.

My thoughts, since this story came to my attention, have very much centred on the delights of our Australian *Cab Savs*.

Cheers, from Roy Fordham, Your Northern Correspondent.

Calendar of Events

5 July 2008 Lunch with the Tiger Moths. Luskintyre NSW

19-20 July 2008 Temora Aviation Museum Flying Days. Temora NSW

2 August 2008 Lunch with the Tiger Moths. Luskintyre NSW

2 August 2008 Dalby Wings and Wheels Spectacular. Dalby Qld

16-17 August 2008 Caboolture Aero Club Fly-in. Caboolture Qld

29-31 August 2008 Festival of Flight. Watts Bridge Qld

30-31 August 2008 Temora Aviation Museum Flying Days. Temora NSW

4-6 October 2008 Arthur Butler Memorial Fly-in. Tooraweenah NSW).

Contributions and Contacts

News items, other contributions, or requests for information etc for inclusion in the newsletter can be sent to AHSA (NSW) at P.O. Box K346, Haymarket NSW 1238 or to Warwick Bigsworth, E-mail (madsen2010@optusnet.com.au) or (02) 8824 7814.

Thanks

Thanks to Eric Cunningham, Roy Fordham, Keith White and John Scott for their contributions to this newsletter.

AUTUMN PAGEANT

The programme of events for the Autumn Pageant of the Aero Club of N.S.W., to be held on May 14 next, is as follows:—

- Event 1—1.15 p.m.: Club-trained Pilots Handicap—9 miles.
- Event 2—1.45 p.m.: Aerial Derby and Derby Handicap—40 miles.
- Event 3—2.20 p.m.: Gliding Display.
- Event 4—2.40 p.m.: Junkers Handicap Race—9 miles.
- Event 5—2.55 p.m.: Balloon Bursting (D. F. Collins).
- Event 6—3.05 p.m.: All Schools Head of the Air Race—9 miles.
- Event 7—3.20 p.m.: Crazy Flying (G. McC. Littlejohn).
- Event 8—3.30 p.m.: G.P.S. Head of the Air Race—9 miles.
- Event 9—3.45 p.m.: Display by R.A.A.F.—6 Wobbits Formation Diving; Moths Formation Aerobatics; Individual Moth Aerobatics.
- Event 10—4.15 p.m.: Artillery Display, target pegging and trick motor cyclists.
- Set piece. Taking the strong post.
- Event 11—5.00 p.m.: Aero Club Farewell.

As the results of the tests in the G.P.S. Head of the Air Race flown on April 16, the following will fly for their schools:—

- Sydney Grammar. A. T. Crilland.
- Parramatta. G. F. Hughes.
- Shore. G. L. King.
- St. Joseph's. G. N. Mills.

LADY OF THE AIR

The organisation for the "Lady of the Air" tourney is proceeding. The purpose of the tourney is to meet the

ever-growing interest in aviation shown by the womenfolk of N.S.W., and to help the Benevolent Society of N.S.W. The Aero Club of N.S.W. is sponsoring the event.



Fraulin Elli Beinborn being escorted to the Club House at Mascot.

CARDIGANS

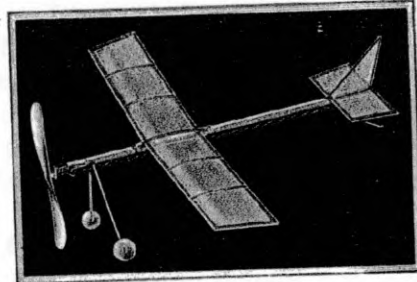
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The Walther "Wasp," 18in. span, 6/6; "Swallow," 23in. span, 11/6. Post, N.S.W., 1/3; Qld., Vic., 1/9.

Walther "Eagle," 28in. span, 14/6. Post, N.S.W., 1/6; Qld., 2/3.

Kits to Build Your Own Models, with plan and instructions. No. 1 Wasp, with propeller block, 3/3. No. 1 B, with propeller blank cut for carving, 3/9. No. 1 P, with ready-made propeller, 4/6. Post 1/-.

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LOOPS AND LANDINGS

Inspired by John Kingsford-Smith

In Search of Bolivar - Part 2.

The Fun of Flying exhibition, held at Adelaide's Jubilee Oval on the afternoon of Saturday, December 11, 1909, was the culmination of a year during which South Australians became increasingly aware of the progress of powered flight. In September, The Commonwealth Department of Defence announced a prize of £5000 for the Australian inventor of a flying machine for military purposes. During October it was proposed that a South Australian section of The Aerial League be formed. Then, on October 25, Colin Defries stepped ashore at Port Adelaide to be interviewed by reporters, one of whom described him as, "young and sinewy, clear visioned and quick-witted." Defries toured Adelaide, before rejoining *RMS Orontes*, in search of a suitable enclosed ground for the aviation demonstrations he planned in the city, following his performances in Sydney and Melbourne. He declared the *Morphettville Racecourse* the best location, for his purpose, that he had yet seen in Australia. Interest then turned to the local boy, Fred Jones, who arrived back at Port Adelaide on November 8, on board the *RMS Otranto*. Coincidentally, the *Otranto* was carrying in its hold a Wright Model A, named *The Stella*, which was consigned for Sydney. *The Register* commented: "A fortnight ago Mr C. Defries arrived from the Continent to give demonstrations with a Wilbur Wright aeroplane, and now Mr Fred H. Jones is in Adelaide to give exhibitions with models of various makes of planes, and make some ascents in a Bleriot machine." However the Bleriot had not yet been shipped from the Continent. When *The Fun of Flying* exhibition was organised for December, it was as if the citizens of Adelaide couldn't wait for Defries or Jones. They wanted to witness the miracle of powered flight before Christmas.

The AGM of *The Automobile Club of South Australia* was held on Monday evening, October 18. A motion was carried to appoint a subcommittee with the object of forming a South Australian section of *The Aerial League*. During the meeting the President, Mr T. E. Barr Smith, disclosed that he had been a member of a syndicate that financed an experiment with manned, heavier-than-air flight at the turn of the century. The inventor, Mr F. G. Ayres of Meningie, applied for a patent for his "Improved Flying Machine", and was granted a certificate of provisional protection on September 5, 1900. With a wing span of 40 ft, and a length of 60 ft, the glider was impressive in size. It was provided with a wire netting cabin for the pilot and his controls. Mr Barr Smith, with other syndicate members were at Rumbelly Point when the glider was towed into a 10 - 15 mph wind by a horse and trap driven at about 10 mph. The glider became airborne, but soon the airframe began failing, and control was lost. Mr Ayres emerged unhurt from the wreckage, after the glider crashed inverted. He later maintained that: "My invention was right in theory, and if I had sufficient capital, and could have obtained a suitable engine, I would have succeeded eventually in my endeavour to achieve the conquest of the air." And maybe today, Rumbelly Point would be more famous than Kill Devil Hills!

During *The Automobile Club* AGM, it was also mentioned that, "a member was experimenting in aeroplaning and would probably achieve some success." That member was Bill Wittber, and he was interviewed the following day by a reporter from *The Register*. At the time of the interview, Bill Wittber was a partner in a firm of automotive engineers, Messrs Wittber & Burden. He had for some years taken part in major reliability trials for automobiles, and explained how this kind of experience was typical of many who were currently involved with aeroplanes. For the last five months he had been building a half-scale model of a monoplane which he described as, "a half-size machine for experimental purposes, and will measure about 16 ft over all. The frame will be of specially selected, straight-grained ash, and the aero cloth has been tested and chosen by the Dunlop Company, which has given me valuable assistance in this respect. It is of the monoplane type, a shandy of all the monoplanes built, and I am aiming to secure automatic stability in the air." He was also fabricating, "the lightest and most economical engine possible for his monoplane without sacrificing efficiency."

The Aerial League of South Australia was formally launched at a public meeting in the

Adelaide Town Hall on November 5, just three days before Fred Jones arrived back home. If his arrival in Europe could not have been better timed, then the same could be said for his homecoming. The work of raising public interest in aviation, essential for the commercial success of his venture, had been done for him while he was abroad. In an interview reported in *The Register*, on November 9, he revealed the extent of his plans to introduce powered flight to South Australia: "He said it was quite true that he had the authority of M. Bleriot, the famous French aerialist, to introduce his flying machine to Australia...Subsequently he would get a second and bigger plane from France." Jones then disclosed his plans to manufacture, not Bleriot monoplanes, but a new type of biplane with a design based on the successful performance of the competition winning, rubber-powered models made by G. P. Bragg Smith. Jones said that he had brought back with him several of the Bragg Smith models, and planned to import a full-sized machine. He also stated that: "Complete machines have already been made in England, and the plan has been adopted in France. In both countries it is regarded in a high light. I have been fortunate to secure the Australian rights for it, and I am going to start manufacturing in Adelaide right away. I have the necessary engines, timber, and aluminium, so there will be no delay whatever."

A letter to the editor of *The Register*, from 'Correspondent', titled 'Youths as Aerial Scouts and Aviators', was published on November 19. It outlined the ways in which the youth of Great Britain, France and the USA had been encouraged to devote some of its spare time to aviation matters, and expressed the hope that, with similar encouragement, "we may then look confidently for the future performance of our South Australian boys to rival those of the motherland or any other portion of the globe." More to the point, the letter announced that the Parkside-Eastwood Boys Brigade was organising a great aviation competition at the Jubilee Oval for December 11. 'Correspondent' could not have known that two Adelaide youths, Ross and Keith Smith, would be celebrating their respective birthdays in December. Ross would be seventeen on December 4, while Keith would be nineteen on December 20.

Fred Jones agreed to demonstrate the Bragg Smith flying models during what was to be named, *The Fun of Flying* day. There were also to be kite flying competitions, balloon ascents and parachute descents. However, the major attraction would undoubtedly be the appearance of no less than three full-sized powered aeroplanes, together with Fred Wittber's half-sized monoplane. It was claimed that Sergeant Major Robert Doherty (late RA), the owner of one of the aeroplanes, "had already flown several times in his own machine." He had invited the Secretary of *The Automobile Club* to go up with him on the big day. This prompted 'Correspondent' to speculate that, "If Mr Paterson accepts the invitation... the crowd at the oval will no doubt be greatly augmented in order to watch the proceedings and pray for his safe return. "Mr Paterson declined, and the Sergeant Major substituted the promise of a flight, circumstances permitting, from the oval to Glen Ewin, a distance of 14 miles.

The Advertiser reported on *The Fun of Flying* day on Monday, December 13. "The 4000 persons who attended at the Jubilee Oval on Saturday afternoon to witness an aerial demonstration learnt little of the art of aviation. For this loss they were themselves to some extent responsible, for so great a crowd intruded upon the area that starting an aeroplane on its flight would have been difficult and dangerous, and that was the reason why at least two makers of aeroplanes would not attempt to make a flight." The two, who perhaps could have started the engines of their aeroplanes, were Mr Gainsford and Mr Wittber. However, both had trouble protecting their exhibits from damage caused by the jostling crowd. Similar problems were experienced by Mr Richardson, the owner of the *Albatross* monoplane, although this machine was still awaiting its 7-9 hp engine, which he had ordered from France. Unfortunately Sergeant Major Doherty failed to get his aeroplane to the oval, either by land or by air. The day was saved by spectacular demonstrations of kite flying, with accompanying fireworks, by members of the Chinese community. "Too much praise cannot be given to the Chinese citizens for the great interest they manifested in the demonstration and large amount of work they had done to make their part of this show the great attraction it proved." *The Fun of Flying* day also introduced Bill Wittber, the practical engineer, to Fred Jones, the entrepreneurial salesman. South Australians now looked forward to that partnership bringing them powered flight early in the New Year.... **John Scott.**



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The Newsletter of AHSA (NSW) Inc

August 2008 No.420

August Meeting

The August meeting will be held at the Powerhouse Museum on Wednesday 6th August 2008, at 7.45pm. Enter from the Macarthur Street end and the meeting room is adjacent to the foyer. Visitors are most welcome and supper will be available after the meeting.

The theme for the evening will be a Members' Night with a feature DVD of

Warbirds over Wanaka 2008

John Scott was one of several members who attended the 2008 Warbirds over Wanaka airshow in New Zealand. John secured a DVD of the Easter weekend's events and has kindly supplied it for viewing at the August meeting.

Warbirds over Wanaka is a celebration of the achievements of mankind over the past 100 years or more in a number of fields, principally aviation in peace and in war but also in agriculture and technology generally. In 1988 aviation entrepreneur Sir Tim Wallis presented an airshow and country fair that attracted 14,000 visitors to Wanaka Airport. Delighted with this success, he decided to expand on the theme and hold a biennial event over the long Easter weekend. As the show grew so did its support and now almost 100,000 people make the pilgrimage to Wanaka for their weekend of excitement.

Warbirds over Wanaka International Airshow 2008 has been acclaimed as the most spectacular warbird airshow ever held in the southern hemisphere. For three days over Easter, Lake Wanaka became centre-stage for an extravaganza of aerial action never before seen in New Zealand. Some of the most famous warbirds in the world joined forces with the classic aircraft of yesteryear and the modern jets of today to present a veritable feast of aviation attractions.

Buy, sell and swap will also be available for those members wishing to trade in aviation ephemera.

In addition, we will be offering more of the Barry Walker collection of books for sale. A list of the books available is attached to this newsletter.

Please join us for another enjoyable evening.

July Meeting

The Guest Speaker for the July meeting was Captain John Zarlenga, who spoke about his recent flying experiences with Ryanair. John is a current Airbus A330 captain with Qantas, so it was most interesting to discover his opinions about a European Low Cost Carrier (LCC) and the contrasts with his now usual flights to Asia and the USA.

There are many differences between the types of flying – European short haul with several legs each day; five days on and four days off; early start or a lunch-time start, and back home each night at his base of Dublin. With Qantas, most flights are one sector per day and an overnight in a foreign capital, and the roster is programmed many weeks in advance. No such luxury with Ryanair – frequent changes and only knowing your roster a week ahead.

Ryanair pilots are expected to prepare their own flight plans and order fuel based on the weather conditions and operational requirements for the flight. In Qantas, such matters are attended to by company despatch, with the necessary flight plan and fuel plan awaiting the crew when they sign on duty.

Perhaps the most revealing aspect of the talk was the expenses which are incurred by the crew themselves; pilots are expected to pay for their own uniforms, endorsements, licence renewals and even meals on board!

Ryanair currently has 166 B737-800s in its fleet with about another 100 on order, and the airline expects to carry 56 million passengers this year. By comparison, at the time of writing, Qantas had a total of 60 B737s of 3 models, 34 B747s of 2 models, 29 B767s, and 15 Airbus A330 of 2 models. (It is acknowledged that this is not a true comparison as the nature of operations by each airline is vastly different. Qantas, excluding Qantaslink and Jetstar, carried 24,950,000 passengers during 2006/7, however the forecast for 2008 is not available, and its accuracy would be questionable given the current airline industry and related fuel crisis. *Ed.*)

Whilst John said how much he enjoyed his 12 month tenure with Ryanair, he did acknowledge that one year of such flying was enough. It was sure a good way to log hours on B737s quickly.

John also discussed the merits of his own Piper Aerostar, an excellent light twin engine aircraft which he flies for pleasure.

All members who attended the meeting were most impressed with John's enthusiasm for the job and the most interesting presentation.

AHSA (NSW) Inc Book Collection

The Society has a large collection of books that is currently placed in the library of the Australian Aviation Museum Bankstown. The books are in the process of being integrated with the Museum's collection. The Museum has kindly prepared a listing of the Society's books; copies of this list will be available for sale to members at cost price (\$2.20). Contact Hon Sec. Warwick Bigsworth if you would like a copy.

Members are welcome to visit the Museum's library at Bankstown on days when the Museum is open; currently Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays. The Museum advises that it is not necessarily open every Sunday, so check before departure. Books are available to peruse in situ, but are not available to be borrowed.

Barry Walker Memorial Award

Readers will be aware that our late member Barry Walker donated his book collection to the Society for sale to other members. The Committee has agreed that the proceeds of the sales should be used in part to provide an award to a contributor to the newsletter, *Southern Skies*.

The award will be awarded to the contributor of the best original manuscript published in the newsletter each year. Such a manuscript could be in the form of anecdotes, research or the like.

The Committee looks forward to your contributions.

Monthly Meetings

Due to the non-availability of a previously arranged guest speaker, we are seeking any volunteers to speak on their pet aviation hobby or project at the September or October monthly meeting. Anyone willing to speak for about 15 minutes on his or her topic should contact John Scott or Warwick Bigsworth.

Any member who has a colleague, friend or acquaintance who might be a guest speaker is also invited to contact the above Committee members.

Arthur Butler Memorial Fly-in 2008

The Arthur Butler Memorial Committee has arranged a memorial weekend to be held at Tooraweenah Aerodrome on the Labour Day Weekend, 4-6 October 2008.

Arthur Butler, a contemporary of Nancy Bird and Sir Charles Kingsford Smith, was a remarkable man. Although well remembered in aviation circles, and especially by our own Society, his is not regarded as a household name. This memorial weekend will go some way to establish his place in the minds of the Australian people, as well as the archives.

The Committee will commemorate his lifetime achievements with the Arthur Butler Fly-in Memorial Weekend. The programme will include:

Viewing of vintage and contemporary aircraft and aviation memorabilia; guest speakers on aviation history and anecdotes; dedication of memorial plaques; book launch; memorial Dinner and entertainment at the Mountain View Hotel.

The Committee is also keen to invite anyone who worked for or with Arthur Butler, or for Butler Air Transport or Airlines of NSW to attend the celebrations. This will be an ideal opportunity to gather old friends together to remember wonderful pioneering days of flying with Butler Air Transport.

Anyone with memorabilia relating to Arthur Butler or his airline and is willing to display such is invited to contact Patty Webb on (02) 6825 4372 or via email on topwalga@bigpond.com.

For those seeking pilot information contact Gordon Foran on (02) 6847 0673 or via email at gordon.foran@bigpond.com.

Any other information can be obtained from the Memorial Secretary, Jan Robertson on (02) 6848 5315 or via email at janr@bordnet.com.

Lawrence Hargrave Centre

The Lawrence Hargrave Centre (LHC) has been incorporated to develop a purpose-built centre in Stanwell Park which will draw attention to the pioneering contribution that Lawrence Hargrave made to the development of human flight. The Centre will symbolically reflect his inventions as well as providing a focal point for Stanwell Park residents and visitors.

The LHC is in need of local and corporate support to celebrate the heritage of Lawrence Hargrave; highlight events related to his work and achievements; and, develop a purpose-built centre. The LHC is therefore seeking members and contributors. Membership forms can be obtained from AHSA (NSW) Hon Sec. Warwick Bigsworth.

For more information see the website: www.LawrenceHargraveCentre.com.au

Museum of Sydney Exhibition

Readers are reminded that the Museum of Sydney's exhibition, *Flying Boats - Sydney's Golden Age of Aviation*, is open until the 14th September 2008.

The exhibition features models, posters, images and memorabilia from the days when flying boats operated from Rose Bay.

On the Internet

Allen Clarke has kindly provided several websites that should be of interest to readers.

Century of Flight

(www.century-of-flight.net/index.htm)

This site features dozens of pages including aviation timeline, aviation pioneers, aviation prior to WWI, aviation during WWI, aviation during WWII, airships, flying boats, history of airlines, history of the flying wing, posters, nose art, aviation myths and legends and much more.

Collect Air / Woodason Aircraft Models History

(www.collectair.com/woodason.html)

These pages are part of the Collect Air website and features the story of Victor Woodason (1904-1964) who for over 30 years created aircraft models for the aviation industry, airlines, movies, the UK air Ministry and other government agencies.

The Collect Air site itself (www.collectair.com) is a treasure trove of aircraft models and images, plus amongst other things, the story of the Cessna CH-1 Skyhook helicopter.

RAF Historical Society Journals

(www.rafmuseum.org.uk/london/research/journals.cfm)

These pages of the RAF Museum website feature the Journals of the RAF Historical Society and include the Papers presented at the Society's seminars. Eminent speakers include former Chiefs of the Air Staff and heads of the Ministry. For those with any interest in RAF history, its campaigns in wartime and in peace, this is well worth perusing.

The DC-3 in Europe – (as reported by Bloomberg)

Douglas DC-3 aircraft survived World War II and the Berlin Airlift, but they won't survive the European Union.

The EU introduced rules, effective from the 21st July 2008, that require aircraft used for commercial passenger flights, even vintage models, to incorporate safety features found on modern Boeing and Airbus aircraft. The regulations will take passengers out of the U.K.'s last three DC-3s, which have carried tens of thousands of aviation enthusiasts since exiting military service in the early 1970s.

"It's bureaucracy gone mad," said Trevor Cherrington, 49, a civil servant who paid 90 pounds (\$179) for one of the 64-year-old planes' last joyrides. "If they've been flying this many years, how have they suddenly become dangerous?"

The DC-3s are operated by Air Atlantique Classic Flight Ltd. The model of aircraft, which during World War II filled the skies over southeastern England as they ferried soldiers across the channel, became a symbol of the Allied armed forces and featured in the television series "Band of Brothers" and movie "A Bridge Too Far."

"It's really about keeping these aircraft living and flying for people to see and not putting them in museums to become, as we call it, stuffed birds," said Richard Parr, England-based Air Atlantique's commercial director.

The company, the U.K.'s largest operator of vintage aircraft, flew about 9,000 passengers on the DC-3s as part of a "Goodbye Dakotas" tour between April 19 and July 13.

The new rules, EU-OPS, require weather radar, oxygen masks and escape chutes in all passenger aircraft. Air Atlantique says these aren't needed on aircraft that only fly in clear weather, at altitudes low enough to breathe, and with exits about four feet off the ground.

Elsewhere in Europe, vintage-plane operators face the same rules. In France, the "Pink Lady" B-17 may be grounded next year amid rising insurance costs, according to the Association Forteresse Toujours Volante, a group for vintage-plane enthusiasts. The Dutch Dakota Association, based in Amsterdam, plans to adapt its two DC-3s to comply with the regulations.

Three years ago, England's last B-17 Flying Fortress was grounded after EU rules meant the aircraft fell into a more expensive insurance category. The Sally B, which appeared in the film "Memphis Belle," was classified in the same insurance group as a small airliner, resulting in an extra 1,000-pound-a-day insurance premium.

"If you're going to put more safety features in, technically you're going to have a safer aeroplane," Parr said. "But that's to imply that they're not safe in the first place, and we've been operating perfectly safely."

"After the war, DC-3s were the backbone of airlines around the world," said historian Henry Holden, the author of two books on the aircraft. "It is an easy airplane to fly, forgives many pilot errors, and its reputation has been passed down from generation to generation."

Fuel costs and soaring commodity prices are also making the upkeep of vintage aircraft more difficult, Parr said. Air Atlantique's DC-6, on display at the Farnborough International Air Show, takes 11,000 litres (2,905 gallons) of aviation fuel.

Simply keeping the Dakotas in condition for aerial displays or film work will cost as much as 100,000 pounds an aircraft a year, Parr said.

The U.K.'s aviation regulator says it may be able to get an exemption from the EU for vintage aircraft-operators like Air Atlantique if they're willing to make some of the required modifications.

The European Commission, the 27-nation EU's regulatory arm in Brussels, says exemptions from the legislation are possible.

"From a business point of view, we can't invest in the aircraft without knowing for sure whether they'll be able to fly or not," Parr said.

Douglas, bought by McDonnell Aircraft Corp. in 1967 and merged with Boeing 30 years later, built about 10,600 DC-3s between 1935 and 1945. About 500 are operating, said Parr, most flying freight in South America, Africa and Asia.

"They've been such a wonderful transport aircraft," said Teresa Davidson, a 64-year-old retiree as she waited for her husband and son to return from a Dakota flight. "I think it is a pity because there will always be a demand for them."

(Let's hope such bureaucratic decisions do not occur here! *Ed.*)

For the Diary

Arthur Butler Memorial Lecture

The Arthur Butler Memorial Lecture, which will be held at our November meeting, (Wednesday 5th November) will be presented by Dr Ron Yates AM, former Chief Executive Officer of Qantas and a host of many other important roles.

Dr Yates is also one of the guest speakers at the Arthur Butler Memorial Fly-in at Tooraweenah in October.

Jonnie Russell CD Launch and Anniversary Concert

This concert is being held to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the crossing of the Pacific by Charles Kingsford Smith, Charles Ulm, Harry Lyons and Jim Warner. Enjoy some of Australia's top line entertainers at The State Theatre, Sydney on Tuesday 14th October 2008.

For Sale - Book and Document Collection

Matt Seaberg is the grandson of the late Ken Dale and has inherited Ken's large aviation library. Amongst the library, there are personally signed books, photos and original correspondence of Sid Marshall. It also includes original maintenance manuals, pilot's notes, training manuals and exams dating back to 1932. There are also original newspapers and magazines associated with significant aviation events including Ross Smith's article in National Geographic 1921.

If you are interested in buying part of the collection, a copy of the catalogue can be provided by

email from Warwick Bigsworth (email below), or contact Matt directly at 0402 243 411 or mattseaberg@hotmail.com. All negotiations should be conducted directly with Matt.

Help Wanted

Where's Carlo?

Relatives from England are searching for an aircraft engineer who worked at Bankstown during the 1950s. The engineer sought is Carlo Saunders, who may also have been known as Carlo Carracio; relatives believe that he may have worked for Hawker de Havilland.

Anyone knowing of Carlo is requested to contact Pauleen Cass, PO Box 341 Nightcliff NT 0814, or at pca09144@bigpond.net.au, who will pass on details to the UK relatives.

Calendar of Events

2 August 2008 Lunch with the Tiger Moths. Luskintyre NSW

2 August 2008 Dalby Wings and Wheels Spectacular. Dalby Qld

16-17 August 2008 Caboolture Aero Club Fly-in. Caboolture Qld

29-31 August 2008 Festival of Flight. Watts Bridge Qld

30-31 August 2008 Temora Aviation Museum Flying Days. Temora NSW

19-21 September 2008 SAAA Escape to Cowra Convention. Cowra NSW

4 October 2008 Lunch with the Tiger Moths. Luskintyre NSW

4-5 October 2008 Australian Defence Force Air Show. Amberley Qld

4-6 October 2008 Arthur Butler Memorial Fly-in. Tooraweenah NSW

11-12 October 2008 Temora Aviation Museum Flying Days. Temora NSW

18-19 October 2008 Rotors, Wings & Wheels - Museum of Australian Army Flying. Oakey Qld

25-26 October 2008 Fleet Air Arm Diamond Jubilee Air Show. Nowra NSW

Contributions and Contacts

News items, other contributions, or requests for information etc for inclusion in the newsletter can be sent to AHSA (NSW) at P.O. Box K346, Haymarket NSW 1238 or to Warwick Bigsworth, E-mail (madsen2010@optusnet.com.au) or (02) 8824 7814.

Thanks

Thanks to Allen Clarke, Ian Debenham, Keith White and John Scott for their contributions to this newsletter.

Barry Walker Book Collection

For Sale at August 2008 Monthly Meeting

50 Cent Selection

		<u>cover</u>	<u>quality</u>
Hot Air Ballooning	Christine Turnbull	soft	fair
Tackle Gliding This Way	John Sampson	hard	poor
Laminated photographs - each	various sizes		fair- good

\$1.00 Selection

Magazines

Airpower Volume 11 No. 4 July 1981			fair
Airplane – Part 39 – the Complete Aviation Encyclopedia			fair
Flight International 17 January 1981			fair
Phoebus History of the World Wars – Naval Aircraft 1914 – 1939			fair
World Airline Fleets News May 2005			good

\$2.00 Selection

Aircraft – An All-colour Story of Modern Flight	David Mondey	hard	poor
Bent & Battered Wings Vol 2 USAAF/USAF 1935-57	Larry Davis	soft	poor
Crackup!	Len Morgan	soft	fair
Giant Steps – A Book of Giant R/C Aircraft		soft	fair
Halfway to Heaven	Fred Hoinville	hard	poor
Outback Airman	Harry Purvis with Joan Priest	hard	poor
Reno Air Racing Unlimited	Nigel Moll	soft	good
Russia's Ekranoplans – The Caspian Sea Monster	Sergey Komissarov	soft	fair
The B-1 Bomber	William G. Holder	soft	good
The Beginner's Guide to Radio Controlled Sport Flying	Douglass R. Pratt	soft	fair

Numerous Videos – various titles, mainly home recorded

\$5.00 Selection

B-29 Superfortress	John Pimlot	hard	fair
Boeing – The World's Greatest Planemakers	Christopher Chant	hard	fair
Fighter Aircraft in Colour	Bill Gunston	hard	good
Flying High – The Story of Hudson Fysh.....	Timothy Hall	hard	fair
Ground Attack Aircraft of WWII	Christopher Shores	hard	fair
History of World Airpower	Michael J Taylor	hard	good
Pioneer Airwoman – The Story of Mrs Bonney	Terry Gwynn-Jones	hard	fair
The Encyclopedia of German Military Aircraft	Brian Philpott	hard	good
The Hamlyn Concise Guide to Soviet Military Aircraft	Bill Sweetman	soft	fair

(\$5.00 Selection [continued])

The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Commercial Aircraft	Bill Gunston	hard	fair
The Skies Remember – the Story of Ross & Keith Smith	A. Grenfell Price	hard	fair

\$10.00 Selection

Battle of Britain: The Hardest Day: 18 August 1940	Alfred Price	hard	fair
Flying the Royal Mail – History of Australia's Airlines	Samuel Brimson	hard	fair
Great Aircraft Collections of the World	Bob Ogden	hard	fair
Military Aircraft Markings and Profiles	Barry C. Wheeler	hard	good
Raiders of the Reich: Air Battle Western Europe	Martin Bowman & Theo Boiten	hard	good
The World's Great Bombers	Chris Chant	hard	good
US Air Force Colours 1926 – 1942	Dana Bell	hard	fair
Wide Body – The Making of the 747	Clive Irving	hard	good

\$20 Selection

Combat Aircraft of WWII (Set of 6 Volumes)	Enzo Angelucci & Paolo Matricardi	hard	good
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\$25.00 Selection

B-25 Mitchell – The Magnificent Medium	N.L. Avery	hard	good
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\$30.00 Selection

Jane's Encyclopedia of Aviation Deluxe 5 Volume Set		hard	good
World War II Fighters Set of 6:	All Illustrated by Rikyu Watanabe	hard	good
F4U Corsair	Text Fredrick A Johnsen		
Focke-Wulf Fw190	Robert Grinsell		
Hellcat	David A Anderton		
Messerschmitt Bf109	Robert Grinsell		
P-38 Lightning	Jeffrey L Ethell		
Stuka Ju87	Alex Vanags-Baginskis		

(The above 6 also available at \$7.00 each)

LOOPS AND LANDINGS

Inspired by John Kingsford-Smith

In Search of Bolivar - Part 3.

Selfridge's Department Store at 400 Oxford Street, London, will celebrate its centenary on March 15, 2009. I have a postcard produced by Selfridge's which is almost as old as the store itself. The card's subject is, "The Bleriot Monoplane", on which, "The crossing of the English Channel by M. Bleriot on Sunday, July 25th, 1909, marks an epoch in Aviation and in the twentieth century." The card goes on to advertise: "The Bleriot Monoplane may be seen on the 26th, 27th, 28th and 29th, at Selfridge's Store, no charge for admission of course."

Louis Bleriot landed in a meadow at Dover at 5.17am on a Sunday morning. I often wondered how the publicity value of the event was so quickly assessed, with thousands of postcards printed, and the Bleriot hoisted onto the roof of London's brand new department store, ready for public viewing, on the following day. I found an explanation in Graham Wallace's book, *Flying Witness, Harry Harper and the Golden Age of Aviation*: "After breakfast the party adjourned to Northfall meadow to inspect the aeroplane. A large crowd had gathered round it, and every square inch of the fabric was covered with signatures. In the course of the day a tent was erected over the machine and a sixpenny entrance fee charged; over £63 were collected for the Dover hospitals and the police pension fund. Gordon Selfridge, motoring in the neighbourhood, offered to pay £200 to a London hospital for the right to exhibit the monoplane in his Oxford Street store."

During the four days the Bleriot was on display at Selfridge's, more than 120,000 people were able to see it. The huge crowds necessitated the store remaining open until midnight each day. Fred Jones was in London at the time, and joined the crowd, not once but several times, to inspect this wonder of the age. There is no doubt that the experience greatly impressed the salesman in Fred Jones. It is no coincidence, therefore, that when his own Bleriot finally arrived at Port Adelaide on February 3, 1910, on board the *S. S. Schwaben*, it was taken in its packing case directly to the Kent Town stores of John Martin and Co Limited. Jones had already negotiated with the management of the largest department store in Adelaide, John Martin's in Rundle Street, accepting £125 to allow the store to exhibit his aeroplane. John Martin's also used the advertising style of Selfridge's, no doubt with information and advice from Jones. Newspaper ads for the Grand Opening of the exhibition, on Monday February 14, proclaimed, "The First Successful Monoplane in the Whole World - The Bleriot", emphasising, like Selfridge's, that there would be no entry charge, and urging that: "All Adelaide should see this unique and historical exposition." So successful was the promotion that the original two weeks planned for the exhibition was extended to three.

The third week of February, 1910, saw two Bleriot XIs on exhibition in Australia - one in Adelaide and one in Melbourne. *The Argus*, on February 11, reported that the Adamson owned Bleriot would be on show during the following week at the Melbourne Motor Garage in Spencer Street. The proceeds of the exhibition, from a 1/- entry fee, were to be donated to the search fund for the missing steamer, *Waratah*.

The success of the John Martin's Bleriot exhibition in Adelaide contrasts with the relative failure of the J. & N. Tait, Wright biplane exhibition at Sydney Town Hall three months earlier. Jones managed the pre-exhibition public and press relations with skill: "Mr Jones courteously fitted the machine with its wings, so that readers of *The Register* might have the benefit of a complete and accurate description of its appearance." He understood the importance of good relations with *The Aerial League of South Australia*. He was photographed in front of his Bleriot with the Secretary of *The Aerial League*, Mr R. Harvey-George, for publication in *The Observer*. A private viewing was also arranged for members of *The Aerial League*, and the Governor of the State, Sir Day Hort Bosanquet, prior to the exhibition's opening to the public. Compare this with Sydney, where there was no chance of Colin Defries and George Augustine Taylor being photographed together, because of their irreconcilable differences, and where J. & N. Tait placed an exorbitant 5/- entry charge for the opening

of the Wright biplane exhibition. A subsequent reduction to 2/- did little to revive the public's interest.

Well before the arrival of the Bleriot in Adelaide, Bill Wittber had agreed to assist Jones with its assembly, rigging and preliminary testing. For this assistance he asked for no payment. For him, the opportunity to work with a real, proven aeroplane was worth much more than money. Wittber was born on December 7, 1879, in Salisbury S. A., making him the same age as Fred Jones. His training, through the Adelaide School of Mines, an apprenticeship in electrical engineering, several years at sea as a ship's engineering officer, and finally by his employment in Adelaide as an automotive engineer, had produced an exceptionally talented engineer. In his contribution to our AHSA Journal, December 1963, he wrote: "It was approximately 1906 when I first became interested in the subject of aviation. After reading of the exploits and developments in this science by such celebrated men as the Wright Brothers, Bleriot, the Farman Brothers, Santos Dumont, A. V. Roe, Grahame-White, the Hon. Charles Rolls, and several other pioneers, I became very keen on aviation."

During the initial assembly and preparation of the Bleriot for exhibition, Bill Wittber was assisted by an eager nineteen year old. His name was Fred Custance, and he had earlier approached Fred Jones, wanting to be involved with the Bleriot venture. Like Wittber, he offered his services free of charge. The youthful Custance had recently been a member of a support team for the famous motorist, G. Gilmore White, who, during the past twelve months, had broken several inter-city records between Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney in his 35HP Talbot car. Fred Custance accompanied White when he established a new Melbourne-Sydney record on December 9/10, 1909, (21hr 19min GPO to GPO). This puts Custance in Sydney on the day after Colin Defries first flew at Victoria Park. In fact, Continental Tyres placed newspaper ads coupling the Melbourne-Sydney record, for which it had provided tyres for the Talbot, with, "The first aerial flight in Australia on Thursday, Dec. 9, at Victoria Park Racecourse," for which it had supplied, "Continental fabric for the Wright machine". This association may well have been one of the factors influencing Custance to become involved in aviation when the opportunity presented itself later in Adelaide. Fred Jones, with a wife and two young children, seemed to have no inclination to be a pilot himself. Therefore, the question of who would fly the Bleriot seemed to be answered when Custance asked to join the team.

Frederick Cyril Custance was born at Ongar in Essex, England, on May 16, 1890. He arrived in Adelaide with his parents during 1906. However, this was not the first time his father had been to Adelaide. His father, John Daniel Custance, was born in Norfolk in 1842. John Daniel became a highly respected agricultural scientist, working in England and Japan. He was appointed Professor of Agriculture and adviser to the South Australian Government on June 1, 1881, and moved to Adelaide. He founded the Roseworthy Agricultural College in 1885, returning to England in 1887. Two decades later he came back to South Australia, with his wife and dependent children, to take up an appointment as manager of C. H. Angas's estate, *Broadview*, near Georgetown. Young Fred, who had a love of art and automobiles, was placed as an apprentice with Vivian Lewis Ltd, the Adelaide motor engineers and Talbot car agents. It was the Talbot car connection that led to his association with G. Gilmore White.

The Bleriot was on show at John Martin's Rundle Street store until Saturday, March 5. Fred Jones had arranged with the management of Cheltenham Racecourse, to conduct the Bleriot's first public flight there on Saturday, March 26. This left just three weeks to turn Fred Custance, whose only aeronautical experience was helping to assemble the Bleriot, into a competent display pilot. It took the first of those weeks to organise the removal of the aeroplane from John Martin's, place it back in its large packing case, and transport it on Mr William Frisby's two horse trolley to Mr A. Winzor's property at Bolivar, where Fred Jones had selected a paddock for trials and pilot training. *The Register's* Special Reporter wrote: "Quiet and comparatively little known Bolivar - 10 miles north of Adelaide - does not appear to have been born to greatness; but there is some likelihood that greatness will be thrust upon it. This in connection with conquest of the air, too! Mr F. H. Jones has selected it as the place for trying his monoplane, and since none of the other States has recorded anything in aviation worthy of note, insignificant Bolivar may yet claim the honour of being the scene of the first successful aerial flights in the Commonwealth. That would be achieving fame in one leap." Fame - and a miracle!... **John Scott.**



AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW) Inc

ABN: 83 295 759 224

PO Box K346 Haymarket NSW 1238

Southern Skies

The Newsletter of AHSA (NSW) Inc

September 2008 No.421

September Meeting

The September meeting will be held at the Powerhouse Museum on Wednesday 3rd September 2008, at 7.45pm. Enter from the Macarthur Street end and the meeting room is adjacent to the foyer. Visitors are most welcome and supper will be available after the meeting.

The theme for the evening will be a Members' Night with "Show and Tell", plus "Ten of your most unusual or interesting slides".

Members are invited to display any special piece of aviation ephemera they might have and give a short talk about its special value or background. Members are also invited to show up to 12 new or old slides that have some special or unusual interest.

The remainder of the Barry Walker book collection will also be available for purchase.

Committee Meeting

A Committee meeting commencing at 6.30pm will be held immediately before the monthly meeting.

August Meeting

The August meeting featured the DVD of *Warbirds over Wanaka 2008*, kindly provided by John Scott. This excellent DVD contained flying sequences of most of the participants of the show.

Arguably the best sequence of aerobatics was that performed by Jurgis Kairys in the Juka, an aircraft which he designed and built himself. His display was absolutely superb and amazed observers by the rolls, outside loops, climbs and descents which defied the laws of aerodynamics and gravity. Mind you, the Juka has a 400hp radial engine, which provides an excellent power-to-weight ratio.

The aerobatic displays by the Polikarpovs, Harvards and CT-4s were also most impressive, along with the mock dog-fights of WWI replicas. Nanchangs and Yak-52s were also well represented and gave entertaining displays.

Sir Tim Wallis provided some commentary on the background of the show and despite his physical disability caused initially by a helicopter crash in 1968 and later by the well publicised Spitfire crash at Wanaka in 1996, he still demonstrated his ability to inspire those with a passion for aviation.

The valley off the end of the runway provided ideal cover prior to the display by the RNZAF Hercules, but overall the excellent photography made this a very entertaining DVD.

Roy Fordham also provided some brief shots of the Progressive Aerodyne SeaRey during its stop-over in Cairns on its round-Australia voyage. (See Roy's story below).

Soon to Arrive

Qantas Airbus A380

Qantas has announced that its first A380-841 VH-OQA will be delivered at Toulouse on 19th September and will arrive in Sydney on Sunday 21st September 2008. The aircraft will enter service on the Melbourne – Los Angeles route on 20th October and its first Sydney – Los Angeles service will be on 24th October.

Of special note, is that the aircraft will be named in honour of our esteemed Honorary Life Member, Nancy Bird AO, OBE, OSJ.

Recently Departed

RAAF Boeing 707's Farewell Flights over Sydney

Sydneysiders and residents of the Hawkesbury caught an historic sight in the sky as the RAAF's final Boeing 707-338C A20-624 (ex VH-EAD) marked its last days of service with several sorties over Sydney.

The aircraft, known as 'Richmond Town', was operated by No. 33 Squadron at RAAF Base Richmond and retired from service on Monday 30th June, after 29 years of service.

On Friday 27th June, the B707 returned to RAAF Base Richmond from its most recent deployment to RAAF Base Darwin for Exercise Pitch Black 08. Later that day the B707 led a formation of F/A-18 Hornets over RAAF Base Richmond.

On Monday 30th June it flew over Sydney Harbour accompanied by a Hawk 127 Lead-In Fighter aircraft which collected imagery of the B707 over the Harbour.

The noise and scene attracted some ill-informed media attention by reports that a large aircraft spewing black smoke and followed by a fighter

aircraft was approaching the CBD at building height. Later that afternoon, it conducted a flypast of No. 33 Squadron's farewell parade at RAAF Richmond.

It has been reported that the aircraft has been sold to an American company, which will retain it as an air-to-air refuelling aircraft, although some interested parties had hoped that it remain in Australia.

'Richmond Town' had been repainted with a dark blue tail scheme commemorating the aircraft's service with the RAAF.

USAF B-52H

USAF retires first B-52H Stratofortress bomber aircraft *(courtesy Jane's)*

The US Air Force has retired the first of its ageing Boeing B-52H Stratofortress strategic bomber aircraft, it was announced on 30th July.

The B-52H - tail number LA1023 - was built in 1961 and was assigned to the Eighth Air Force's 2nd Bomb Wing at Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana, although it had recently been operating out of Minot AFB in North Dakota as a result of a shortage of ramp space at Barksdale.

According to the USAF, LA1023 was selected for retirement based "on a number of criteria that looked at the aircraft as a whole". Air Combat Command 5th Maintenance Group Deputy Commander Lieutenant Colonel Bill Stahl said that there were no significant corrosion concerns with this particular B-52H and that it was chosen to be the first aircraft to be retired as it was "not as airworthy" as the remaining aircraft in the fleet.

The USAF has plans to retire 18 B-52H aircraft out of its current fleet of 94 at a rate of one aircraft every two weeks, alternating between Minot and Barksdale AFB.

A USAF spokesperson has said that the primary reason for retiring the 18 aircraft was one of funding as Congress and the Department of Defence have decided that the air force requires fewer B-52H aircraft to fulfil its current mission.

The aircraft will be decommissioned at Tinker AFB in Oklahoma where they will be stored in a hangar in case they are needed at some point in the future.

37 Squadron RAAF Marks 65th Anniversary (Courtesy RAAF Public Relations)

The Royal Australian Air Force's C-130 Hercules continue to make a major contribution to ADF operations in the Middle East as the aircraft's operator, No. 37 Squadron, marked the unit's 65th anniversary late in July.

RAAF C-130J Hercules have taken over combat airlift duties in the Middle East Area of Operations in

a scheduled changeover with C-130Hs. Three RAAF C-130J Hercules from No. 37 Squadron will continue to provide vital intra-theatre combat airlift support for Australian Defence Force and Coalition elements in the Middle East, supported by a detachment of approximately 160 personnel. The RAAF has operated a Hercules deployment to the Middle East Area of Operations since February 2003, with both Hercules variants being routinely rotated.

As of July 2008, RAAF Hercules had completed 2194 missions in the Middle East Area of Operations, for a total of 14,737 flying hours. They have carried 20,760 tonnes of cargo, 93,559 passengers and transported 2283 medical patients.

No. 37 Squadron marked its 65th anniversary during July. Formed on July 15, 1943, at RAAF Base Laverton in Victoria, the Squadron was initially tasked with transporting Australian forces throughout the Pacific.

Commander - Air Lift Group and a former Commanding Officer of No. 37 Squadron, Air Commodore Ian Scott, congratulated members of the unit on their achievements. "Just as they have done since 1943, the personnel at No. 37 Squadron are providing much-needed airlift support to the Australian Defence Force," Air Commodore Scott said. "No. 37 Squadron is sustaining a very high operational tempo overseas and across Australia. They are a credit to themselves and the Air Force."

Initially equipped in 1943 with the Lockheed Lodestar, No. 37 Squadron later flew the Dakota aircraft until its disbandment in 1949. In 1966, the unit reformed with 12 Lockheed C-130E Hercules, which it used to support Australian forces in Vietnam. On Christmas Day 1974, No. 37 Squadron operated the first aircraft into Darwin following Cyclone Tracy.

The Squadron re-equipped with new-generation C-130Js in 2000, and in November 2006 became the RAAF's only Hercules Squadron when it incorporated the C-130Hs previously operated by No. 36 Squadron.

Worth a Visit

Museum of Australian Army Flying

The Museum of Australian Army Flying has recently supplied information about its facility at the Australian Army Aviation Centre at Oakey, Queensland.

During World War II, No.6 Aircraft Depot was established at Oakey as a key RAAF station in the SW Pacific area. Aircraft such as the Beaufort, Kittyhawk, Spitfire, Lancaster, Mustang, Norseman and Wirraway were serviced, repaired and test flown there until early 1946.

Following Federal Government approval in 1968, the Department of Defence acquired Oakey airport from the Department of Civil Aviation. Some elements of the 1st Aviation Regiment relocated to the airfield, but it was not until the majority of Army Aviation assets moved to Oakey in November 1973. It is now the home to Tiger, Black Hawk and Kiowa helicopters and King Air B200 aircraft. The new MRH 90 helicopters will also be based at Oakey.

The Museum's collection features a Bristol Boxkite, Fokker DR1, Auster MkIII, Bell 47 Sioux, CAC Winjeel, Pilatus PC-6B Turbo Porter, Bell 206 Kiowa, Hell UH-1H Huey, GAF Nomad, CAC Boomerang and an extensive workshop.

The Museum is open every day except Christmas Day, Boxing Day and Good Friday.

From our Northern Correspondent North Queensland Gleanings

The battle to save the name of Learmonth Airport goes on and Charles Page is in constant touch with details of media meetings and press releases. His book has received glowing reviews and has made a significant impact on not only those who knew Charles Learmonth, but also to those who knew little of the campaigns fought over New Guinea during World War II and the Douglas A-20 Boston.

It is quite coincidental though, that I find myself embroiled in a similar battle in Cairns. This involves similar actions by local interests to destroy an historic landmark, the Cairns Sailing Club, which has strong connections to the Catalina base in World War II.

In the alleged name of progress, this is to make way for a tower block featuring luxury apartments for the well heeled as "a much needed priority". In fighting this proposal, I have had the pleasure of getting to know Sir Bob Norman's daughter, who is leading the battle to preserve the Sailing Club building. To add to this, I have also had the opportunity to speak to Sir Richard Kingsland, the former Commanding Officer of No.20 (Catalina) Squadron RAAF.

This brings me to a recent enjoyable experience shared in the company of Peter and Trish Stuart-Smith, here in Cairns. Peter's desire to retrace his father's last flight around Australia as a Catalina pilot after the cessation of World War II hostilities inspired him to build an amphibian to do so.

I had arranged to meet up with them whilst they were on their Cairns stop-over in order to find any remaining evidence of the Catalina squadron's presence during World War II. I caught up with them at the Catalina memorial on The Esplanade. For those who may not have visited Cairns, this is quite memorable; a scale model of a Catalina sits atop a tall

column with a brief history of the Catalina operations below.

Of particular interest for me was the fact that they had their homebuilt Progressive Aerodyne SeaRey amphibian VH-PAZ based at Innisfail whilst they were in Cairns. Parking at Cairns Airport is not cheap!

I had hoped Peter and Trish might have slummed it at our humble abode whilst on their brief stop-over; but who could blame them for opting for a bunk at the Cairns International, whose owners, Paul Kamsler and his son, are reportedly Catalina enthusiasts and made an offer that they couldn't refuse. After spending hours on end in the cramped conditions of the SeaRey, the Cairns International would have proved an attractive prospect to any weary traveller.

Cheers from Roy Fordham.

A reminder that Charles Page's book on Charles Learmonth is available:

Wings of Destiny – Wing Commander Charles Learmonth DFC and Bar, and the Air War in New Guinea by Charles Page

Published by Rosenberg, ISBN 9781877058646, \$35, paperback 416 pages, 88 b&w photos, 34 maps & diagrams. Now available, and can be ordered from all good bookshops, or from www.rosenbergpub.com.au or www.amazon.com/books.

New Books

FLY by Michael Veitch

Published by Viking ISBN 9780670071838 hardback, rrp \$49.95 at ABC Shops and other good bookshops.

FLY is the author's second collection of interviews with 24 pilots, navigators and gunners, now all in their 80s, who flew in World War II. (*FLAK* was the first, *Ed*)

A Man Among Mavericks – Lester Brain: Australia's Greatest Aviator by Neil Cadigan

Published by ABC Books ISBN 9780733320965 RRP \$35.00 at ABC Shops

Like many people, Neil Cadigan had never heard of Lester Brain when he stumbled upon information about this little-known aviator while lunching with a mate who was friends of Lester Brain's son, Robert. Starting with nothing but a long-forgotten transcript with Brain, Cadigan set off on an astonishing journey, retracing flights across the unpredictable terrain of Australia. He discovered a man whose amazing flying adventures read like a boys' own annual.

The book covers his extensive involvement with Qantas and his finding the missing airmen, Keith Anderson and "Bob" Hitchcock.

Flight to a Lady by C. Arthur Butler

The second edition of this gem is in publication and will be available for sale at the Arthur Butler Memorial Lecture at our November meeting.

Vale

Ernest Dunkley DFC

Squadron Leader Ern Dunkley DFC was one of a select few Australians who flew the Mosquito with 464 (RAAF) Squadron in England. He made his mark as an exceptional pilot and leader on October 31, 1944, when he led four aircraft low over Denmark to attack the Gestapo at Aarhus. It was a round trip of more than 1900 km, including about 1100 km over sea, all at extreme low level to avoid German radar.

The Gestapo had taken over three buildings at Aarhus University on the Jutland peninsula, from where they terrorised and tortured the local Danes and suppressed resistance. The buildings housed Gestapo and secret field police headquarters and their records.

Leading the second section, through the dust and smoke of the first wave, Dunkley hit the main building and headed home after ensuring the other aircraft were safe. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his airmanship, leadership and daring.

Ernest Henry Dunkley, 88, passed away on July 12, 2008 at Berkeley Vale, NSW after a long battle with cancer.

Ern Dunkley DFC was the guest speaker at the Society's NSW Branch lecture in May 1972. He spoke about his time at 4 Squadron RAF flying Mustangs and 464 Squadron RAAF flying Mosquito Mk6s. He made comparisons between the Mustang and Mosquito and related his story of having to bail out of his damaged Mosquito near Cherbourg, which resulted in him breaking a leg. He also mentioned the raid on Aarhus.

I wish I had attended the meeting; it would have been good to see "Uncle" Ern again.

Museum of Sydney Flying Boats Exhibition

Readers are reminded that the Museum of Sydney's exhibition, *Flying Boats - Sydney's Golden Age of Aviation*, is open until the 14th September 2008.

The exhibition features models, posters, images and memorabilia from the days when flying boats operated from Rose Bay.

For the Diary

Arthur Butler Memorial Lecture

The Arthur Butler Memorial Lecture, which will be held at our November meeting, (Wednesday 5th November) will be presented by Dr Ron Yates AM,

former Chief Executive Officer of Qantas and a host of many other important roles.

Members of The Early Birds Association are especially invited to attend our premier meeting of the year. Dr Yates is also one of the guest speakers at the Arthur Butler Memorial Fly-in at Tooraweenah in October.

Help Wanted

Where's Carlo?

Relatives from England are searching for an aircraft engineer who worked at Bankstown during the 1950s. The engineer sought is Carlo Saunders, who may also have been known as Carlo Carraccio; relatives believe that he may have worked for Hawker de Havilland.

Perhaps some of our *Early Birds* readers might recall him. Anyone knowing of Carlo is requested to contact Pauleen Cass, PO Box 341 Nightcliff NT 0814, or at pca09144@bigpond.net.au, who will pass on details to the UK relatives.

Calendar of Events

30-31 August 2008 Temora Aviation Museum Flying Days. Temora NSW

19-21 September 2008 SAAA Escape to Cowra Convention. Cowra NSW

4 October 2008 Lunch with the Tiger Moths. Luskintyre NSW

4-5 October 2008 Australian Defence Force Air Show. Amberley Qld

4-6 October 2008 Arthur Butler Memorial Fly-in. Tooraweenah NSW

11-12 October 2008 Temora Aviation Museum Flying Days. Temora NSW

18-19 October 2008 Rotors, Wings & Wheels - Museum of Australian Army Flying. Oakey Qld

25-26 October 2008 Fleet Air Arm Diamond Jubilee Air Show. Nowra NSW

1-2 November 2008 Aircraft Model, Memorabilia and Paraphernalia Show. Passenger Terminal Bankstown Airport NSW.

9 November 2008 NSW Sport Aircraft Club Open Day. Wedderburn NSW

Contributions and Contacts

News items, other contributions, or requests for information etc for inclusion in the newsletter can be sent to AHSA (NSW) at P.O. Box K346, Haymarket NSW 1238 or to Warwick Bigsworth, E-mail (madsen2010@optusnet.com.au) or (02) 8824 7814.

Thanks

Thanks to David Eyre, Roy Fordham and John Scott for their contributions to this newsletter.

Barry Walker Book Collection

For Sale at September 2008 Monthly Meeting

50 Cent Selection

		<u>cover</u>	<u>quality</u>
Laminated photographs - each	various sizes		fair- good

\$1.00 Selection

Magazines

Airpower Volume 11 No. 4 July 1981			fair
Airplane – Part 39 – the Complete Aviation Encyclopedia			fair
Flight International 17 January 1981			fair
Phoebus History of the World Wars – Naval Aircraft 1914 – 1939			fair
World Airline Fleets News May 2005			good

\$2.00 Selection

Aircraft – An All-colour Story of Modern Flight	David Mondey	hard	poor
Giant Steps – A Book of Giant R/C Aircraft		soft	fair
The B-1 Bomber	William G. Holder	soft	good
The Beginner's Guide to Radio Controlled Sport Flying	Douglass R. Pratt	soft	fair

Numerous Videos – various titles, mainly home recorded

\$5.00 Selection

B-29 Superfortress	John Pimlot	hard	fair
Boeing – The World's Greatest Planemakers	Christopher Chant	hard	fair
Fighter Aircraft in Colour	Bill Gunston	hard	good
Ground Attack Aircraft of WWII	Christopher Shores	hard	fair
History of World Airpower	Michael J Taylor	hard	good
Pioneer Airwoman – The Story of Mrs Bonney	Terry Gwynn-Jones	hard	fair
The Encyclopedia of German Military Aircraft	Brian Philpott	hard	good
The Hamlyn Concise Guide to Soviet Military Aircraft	Bill Sweetman	soft	fair
The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Commercial Aircraft	Bill Gunston	hard	fair

\$10.00 Selection

Battle of Britain: The Hardest Day: 18 August 1940	Alfred Price	hard	fair
Great Aircraft Collections of the World	Bob Ogden	hard	fair
Military Aircraft Markings and Profiles	Barry C. Wheeler	hard	good
US Air Force Colours 1926 – 1942	Dana Bell	hard	fair
Wide Body – The Making of the 747	Clive Irving	hard	good

\$20 Selection

Combat Aircraft of WWII (Set of 6 Volumes)	Enzo Angelucci & Paolo Matricardi	hard	good
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LOOPS AND LANDINGS

Inspired by John Kingsford-Smith

In Search of Bolivar - Part 4.

The weekend of March 12/13, 1910, marks a watershed in the fortunes of the aeronautical aspirations of Fred Jones and his small team. Before this weekend everything had gone more or less to plan: the press and the public were on side, Bill Wittber's engineering skill was in support, and young Fred Custance was keen to try his hand at the new and exciting sport of powered flight. After this weekend, in the days, weeks, and years ahead: for Fred Jones there would be failure, false claims and suspected fraud; for Bill Wittber there would be some success, followed by a bitter withdrawal from aviation; and for Fred Custance there would be unearned fame, myth making, and a tragic death.

On Saturday, March 12, the Bleriot, still in its crate, arrived at the property of Mr Winzor at Bolivar. The first evidence now emerged that Fred Jones did not fully understand the practical requirements of the task in hand - the testing of his aeroplane, and teaching Fred Custance to fly. It was possible also that finances were strained, and as a result cost cutting was on the mind of Fred Jones. Not that he was paying for the services of either Wittber or Custance. But where there had been a large tent provided for the Wright Model A at Victoria Park Racecourse and Diggers Rest, and for the Voisin at Diggers Rest, at Bolivar there was no safe cover provided under which the Bleriot could be protected and worked on.

The 'Special Reporter' for *The Register* wrote on March 14, 1910: "The housing of the machine on the ground presented the greatest difficulty...The task of assembling the parts and tuning up the numerous stays is easily a couple of hours work for two or three mechanics, and to that might be added another hour or more for removing the planes again for storing overnight. These operations present other disadvantages more serious than merely the amount of time involved. With a costly machine an owner is chary to take chances by trying it in a high or tricky wind. He must choose the few hours of calm each day for practice... To avail himself to the full of these opportunities the machine must constantly be in readiness. Further than that, the various appurtenances require to be adjusted to the greatest nicety and once that exactitude is obtained the aviator could not depend upon striking it again if it was necessary to dismantle the machine immediately afterwards for storage."

One can almost hear a frustrated Bill Wittber giving the 'Special Reporter' the above explanation for the lack of activity on the day the Bleriot arrived at Bolivar. Wittber, at this time, was working as a foreman for the Messrs Eyes & Crowles garage. His commitment to Jones was restricted to his own spare time. He was not responsible for detailed planning. Notwithstanding the lack of a tent, and the fairly strict observance of the Sabbath by local citizens at the time, it was decided that on Sunday the Bleriot would be assembled, and if wind conditions permitted, some taxiing trials would be attempted. At the end of activities on Sunday, the Bleriot would have to be taken apart and placed back in its crate for storage. Following that, the 'Special Reporter' advised: "No further trials will be made until a new canvas home is ready - a matter of a few days." Time was now critical if Fred Custance was to become a capable pilot, before his scheduled public appearance at Cheltenham Racecourse on Saturday March 26.

Early on Sunday, numerous spectators gathered at Bolivar, travelling by horse, cycle and buggy, to witness proceedings. However, it was not until 11 am that the Bleriot was ready for testing. As predicted, the calm air of the early morning had been missed, and as noon approached the wind had risen to fitful gusts. With Fred Custance in the pilot's seat, the 24 hp Anzani engine was tested, requiring four men to hold the Bleriot stationary. What happened next is best described by the 'Special Reporter': "Running at half-speed the machine was released and off it went on its carriage to the other end of the section. An easy pace was maintained just for experience and to 'feel' the ground. Mr Custance said he was happy on his new mount but it felt a bit strange. That strangeness must wear off before any attempt to leave the ground. A similar run was taken by Mr C. W. Wittber and on the return trip before the wind, the machine did an unexpected flutter. A strong puff caught one of

the planes, and caused the machine to rise a few feet clear of the ground, but as she was heading for a rather nasty spot power had to be shut off, and she came to a standstill. The engine was subjected to further satisfactory tests with the machine anchored, after which the trials were abandoned for the day on account of the freshening breeze." That 'unexpected flutter' later became known as 'Wittber's Hop'. At the end of his report the 'Special Reporter' added a revealing comment: "Jones and Custance intend to continue the experiments during the next fortnight, by the end of which it is expected that the 'sky pilot' will have attained efficiency in skimming and short flights." Whether he was unhappy with the unrealistic plans of Fred Jones, or whether his own work responsibilities dictated, Bill Wittber was no longer part of the Jones team.

On the Monday after 'Wittber's Hop', Fred Jones arranged for Flavel and Sons of Adelaide to supply and erect a tent at Bolivar. By Wednesday, March 16, the tent was in place, and assembly of the Bleriot under protected conditions was at last possible. It is probable that Jones and Custance worked on assembling the Bleriot during the time available on Wednesday afternoon. They planned to return to Bolivar early on Thursday morning to resume the trials that had been abandoned on the previous Sunday. However, they would now be without the wise counsel of Bill Wittber, and would have to rely on their own limited experience, supplemented by two typewritten sheets of instructions provided by the Bleriot company. These gave details about assembly, engine operation and pilot training. With regard to the latter, the instructions advised: "practice with the engine while the machine is anchored, and a few days of driving on the wheels or semi-flying around the ground at half speed to practice steering, elevating, rudder and warping of the wings." It was stressed that this period of practice was required before any actual flying was attempted, and then only in calm conditions.

After an interview with Jones in February, the 'Special Reporter' wrote that, "when testing the Bleriot's engine, six men are required to keep the monoplane stationary." His report on the trials at Bolivar on Sunday stated that, "it required the strength of four pairs of hands to restrain her when the engine was opened out." But where were the restraining hands on that eventful Thursday morning? Custance was on board, and Jones swung the propeller. Jones later said, "Custance... took his seat again and opened the the engine full out. It took me all my time to get out of the way." The only other people present were Mr Winzor, the property owner, and near neighbours, Mr & Mrs Sawyer, who had no doubt been driven from their bed early in the morning to find out what all the noise was about.

We now set sail on dangerous waters for the recording of Australian aviation history. Because no disinterested observers were present on Thursday March 17, Adelaide's newspaper reporters were forced to rely on what they were told by Fred Jones. Jones was corroborated by Custance, who then accepted the resulting fame. *The Register* covered the story on March 18, although its 'Special Reporter' no longer used his by-line: "Mr Jones, in an interview, stated: "When we took the machine out at 5 o'clock, there was a dead calm and the air was moist. This suited our purpose admirably. The machine was released, and after running 70 or 80 yards along the ground it rose with a nice gentle sweep to a height of 12 or 15 ft. After doing the three miles in 5m. 25s., the pilot landed without any trouble. Custance, anxious to eclipse the altitude of 30 ft. said to have been obtained by Defries in a Wright machine in Sydney, took his seat again and opened the engine full out. It took me all my time to get out of the way. She gave a run and two hops, entered the air at a very high angle, and shot up to 50 or 60 ft. At that height the airship travelled 200 yards. The machine was still rising and the pilot altered the elevating plane to straighten her. Unfortunately he overdid it, and she dived earthward at an angle of 45 deg., landing almost head on. There was a great crash, which attracted the attention of people a considerable distance away. I saw all the flying at the Rheims meeting in France a few months ago, and not one of the aviators there rose as rapidly as Custance did. Experienced flyers prefer to rise more gradually. A Curtiss machine is credited with having risen in 6s., and I reckon Custance's second attempt came very close to it. He had not gone 40 yards when the machine cleared the ground. The flight was witnessed by Mr A. Winzor and Mr and Mrs Sawyer, who live nearby." From the last sentence it could be inferred that only the second 'flight' had been witnessed. However, according to Jones, the second 'flight' was even more impressive than the first, rivalling Glen Curtiss and his 50 hp Gordon Bennett Cup winning Rheims Racer. Fred Jones could certainly spin a good yarn!.....**John Scott.**



AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW) Inc

ABN: 83 295 759 224

PO Box K346 Haymarket NSW 1238

Southern Skies

The Newsletter of AHSA (NSW) Inc

October 2008 No.422

October Meeting

The September meeting will be held at the Powerhouse Museum on Wednesday 1st October 2008, at 7.45pm. Enter from the Macarthur Street end and the meeting room is adjacent to the foyer. Visitors are most welcome and supper will be available after the meeting.

The Guest Speaker will be John Ulm who will give a biographical talk about his late father, Charles Ulm.

2008 marks the 75th anniversary of the flight by Avro K VH-UXX *Faith in Australia* from Richmond NSW to Heston, near London. On 21st June 1933, Charles Ulm, along with Scotty Allen and PG Taylor, set off for England with the aim to demonstrate their ability to provide a viable alternative to compete for the England – Australia air mail service.

Based on his research of other biographies and historical collections, John will reveal his findings about this flight and others undertaken by his late father.

At Sydney Grammar School, John's talents in writing, languages and history were recognised at an early stage, so it was no surprise to many that he entered a career of journalism. He worked for the *Sydney Sun* newspaper prior to World War II and he enlisted in 1941.

He was called up to the RAAF in 1942 and flew DH-82A Tiger Moths before travelling via North America to Great Britain. He flew Spitfires in 145 SQN RAF and was shot down over Italy about 10 weeks before the end of the war in Europe. He was held as a Prisoner of War and was transported to Germany until liberation.

John returned to Australia to resume employment with the *Sydney Sun* and became a correspondent covering the occupation of Japan and later the Korean War. His role as aviation correspondent and close liaison with Qantas staff led to him being appointed as Specialist Assistant to the incoming Chief Executive, C.O. Turner and other Qantas management. He was Chief Press and Information Officer for many years and retired from Qantas in 1977 following a three year posting as Manager, Wellington, New Zealand.

He returned to the Fairfax organization, and although long retired now, keeps a keen interest in all aviation matters of historical importance.

Please join us for another informative evening of aviation history.

September Meeting

The theme for the evening was a Members' Night with "Show and Tell", and "Your most unusual or interesting slides".

As it happens with these evenings, a host of fascinating items, talks and aircraft images were on display. Bill Holswich discussed a book, *Moresby's Few* by Leslie Jillett which described a series of events in 1942 which brought about the development of Wanigela (also referred to in some documents as Waigela) airfield in PNG. By co-incidence, Bill had acquired several newspaper cuttings which complemented the story from the book. The book was inscribed by Lex Halliday who was the pilot forced down, as mentioned below.

Bill described the background on 32 Squadron RAAF, which was formed in February 1942 from elements of 6 and 24 Squadrons flying Lockheed Hudsons. It initially operated from Port Moresby and later Horn Island, carrying out general reconnaissance and bombing duties to the north of Australia.

In June 1942, a Lockheed Hudson from the squadron made a forced landing at Wanigela, next to the Anglican Mission run by the Reverend Dennis Taylor. Reverend Taylor looked after Lex Halliday until he was picked up by another Hudson several days later. This landing area was seen to be a very suitable site for development as a major airfield. The airfield was so constructed and played a major staging post for larger aircraft involved in the Buna campaign.

One of the newspaper cuttings related the story of when Reverend Taylor led forty members of the Mission over the Owen Stanley Ranges to safety after the Japanese invaded Milne Bay and returned to Wanigela – all on foot! This précis probably does not do justice to Bill's most interesting talk. In fact, the tale could have been a full night's talk by itself.

David Eyre displayed a selection of slides taken at Antique Aeroplane Association, Sport Aircraft Association and Recreational Aviation Australia conventions at Echuca, Cowra and Narromine. As usual, David provided a wide selection of rare and unusual aircraft.

Anthony Coleiro displayed two specially designed plates featuring the KLM DC-2 involvement in the 1934 London to Melbourne Air Race. One plate commemorated the race itself, and the other commemorated its 50th anniversary. These are certainly great collector's pieces. Anthony also displayed a number of slides of gliders – a subject matter not often shown on slide evenings.

John Scott discussed the new issue of Australian stamps featuring the Qantas Airbus A380, Qantas L-1049 Super Constellation, TEAL S.30 Empire Class flying boat, and a Bristol Tourer. Whilst querying the inclusion of a New Zealand flying boat in this stamp issue, it did inspire him to show his comprehensive collection of New Zealand and TEAL flying boat ephemera. John also displayed some slides from the Brian White collection of AHSA flying boat escapades to Lake Eucumbene and Rathmines.

Leen van Lien has an interest in aviation-related toys. The special toy on this occasion was a "Paratrooper Doll" designed by Elvy Kalep.

Leen described how he sought additional information from the International Women's Air and Space Museum on Elvy Kalep, who he found was quite an extraordinary entrepreneur. She was urged to take up flying by Anthony Fokker, rather than undertake the dangerous sport of bobsledding. She was an early member of the "99s". Not only did she design and patent the famous "Paratrooper Doll", but she also wrote the children's book "Air Babies", of which Leen also had a copy. (*Both items fetch tidy amounts on E-Bay. Ed*)

Leen also had for show a genuine World War I amulet hypsometer. His extract from a 1916 Boys' Own Annual also depicted the operation of a dashboard type hypsometer.

In all, this was a most entertaining evening, courtesy of our own members.

Catalina News

There has been some progress made on the restoration of The Catalina Flying Memorial's PBY-6A Catalina. Two engines have been purchased in the USA and are expected to arrive in Portugal early October. A team will depart from Australia to install the engines and it is hoped that the aircraft will be ready to ferry to Australia during November.

In the meantime, its Australian registration of VH-CAT has been cancelled and it is intended to carry out the ferry flight under USA registry. It will

be re-registered as VH-CAT after its arrival back in Australia.

A complete history of the aircraft and much other data about Catalinas, as well further updates on the proposed ferry flight can be obtained from the Catalina Flying Memorial's web-site (www.catalinaflying.org.au)

The Memorial is still seeking funds and tax deductible donations can be made to:

The Treasurer
The Catalina Flying Memorial Limited
Building 2, Ground Floor
35-41 Waterloo Road
Macquarie Park NSW 2113

Australian War Memorial – New Exhibition

The Australian War Memorial has a new permanent exhibition opening soon called *Over the Front*. This exhibition features five rare First World War aircraft including three Australian types (SE5a fighter, Airco DH9 bomber, Avro 504K trainer) and two German fighters (Albatros D. Va and Pfalz D.XII). The exhibition will bring to life the story of military flight and aerial combat in an exciting sound and light show.

Further details on the exhibition will be included in coming issues of *Southern Skies*.

AHSA Inc

Members are reminded of our affiliation with the Aviation Historical Society of Australia Inc, which is based in Melbourne.

The Society produces a quarterly quality journal, *Aviation Heritage* and the *AHSA Newsletter*. Subscription fees are \$50.00 per annum and an application form for membership can be downloaded from the AHSA web-site (www.ahsa.org.au) or from the Hon Secretary of AHSA (NSW) Inc.

The web-site also features other information about the Society and includes a comprehensive list of links to other aviation organizations.

For the Diary

Arthur Butler Memorial Lecture

The Arthur Butler Memorial Lecture, which will be held at our November meeting, (Wednesday 5th November) will be presented by Dr Ron Yates AM, former Chief Executive Officer of Qantas and a host of many other important roles.

Ron is also one of the guest speakers at the Arthur Butler Memorial Fly-in 2008, which will be held at Tooraweenah over the weekend of 4-6 October 2008.

Also expected to be in attendance at both events is Anna Yeats (daughter of Arthur Butler) who will have copies of the revised edition of *Flight to a Lady*

and Arthur Butler's long awaited autobiography for sale.

This important autobiography describes the development of Butler Air Transport and numerous significant events involving the Department of Civil Aviation, Trans Australia Airlines, Australian National Airways and of course, Ansett. It also covers the quest for the provision of air mail services and the growth of, and hardships associated with the operations of regional airlines.

Smoking Danger

A cigarette sparked a \$70m fire aboard an aircraft carrier, says the US Navy's (USN's) Casandra Newell. The cause of a fire that damaged some 80 compartments in the USN's Nimitz-class aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* has been identified as unauthorised smoking of cigarettes.

Pentagon officials confirmed on 30 July that the ship's commanding and executive officers, Captain David Dykhoff and Capt David Dober, had been relieved of their duties for 'substandard performance'. A navy report said there was also a "loss of confidence" in Capt Dykhoff's "ability to command and his failure to meet mission requirements and readiness standards".

An investigation into the fire, which started in an auxiliary boiler room and an air-conditioning and refrigeration space, concluded that its intensity was due to improper storage of flammable liquids and other combustible material in an adjacent space.

USS George Washington was taking part in a refuelling exercise with the Oliver Hazard Perry-class frigate *USS Crommelin* when the fire broke out on 22 May. Dozens of sailors were injured during the 12-hour blaze.

The report stated: "The fire and the subsequent magnitude of the fire were the result of a series of human acts that could have been prevented. Specifically, the storage of 90 gallons of refrigerant compressor oil in an unauthorised space contributed to the intensity of the fire." Extensive damage was caused to electrical systems, with mechanical and structural features sustaining lesser damage. The cost of repairs is estimated at USD70 million.

With the work complete, the carrier - with Capt JR Haley in command - was scheduled to depart San Diego on 21 August and make a belated arrival in its new home port of Yokosuka, Japan, in late September. It will be the first nuclear-powered warship to be stationed in Japan, replacing *USS Kitty Hawk*, the last conventionally powered carrier in United States service.

USS Kitty Hawk stood in for *USS George Washington* during the "Rim of the Pacific" naval

manoeuvres off the Hawaiian Islands between 29 June and 31 July.

New Books

Disaster in the Dandenongs, by Macarthur Job OAM

On 25 October 1938, Australia's worst pre-war aviation disaster occurred on the western face of Mt Dandenong, east of Melbourne.

The Douglas DC-2 VH-UYC, Kyeema, operated by Australian National Airways was in cloud on descent into Essendon on a flight from Adelaide, but overshot the airport by 20 miles and crashed into Mt Dandenong, killing all 18 occupants.

The inquiry into the disaster triggered the beginning of air traffic control and the founding of a separate Department of Civil Aviation.

The book traces the establishment of civil aviation, the circumstances of the crash and the inquiry which highlighted the confused events in the political system of the era. The new Lorenz 33Mhz radio range being installed at Essendon, amongst other airports, could not be used because Cabinet would not approve funding for fast modern aircraft for calibration and to establish landing procedures for the new system. The then Civil Aviation Board wanted to acquire an American aircraft with similar performance to the Douglas and Lockheed type that were in operation or about to enter service.

These circumstances formed part of the scenario which made such an accident inevitable. The lessons learnt influenced the creation of a separate Department of Civil Aviation and a proper air traffic control system and might serve as a timely reminder to air navigation service providers during the current times of belt tightening and staff shortages.

The author, Mac Job OAM needs little introduction as he was initial editor of the then DCA publication, *Aviation Safety Digest*, and has authored the *Air Disaster* and *Air Crash* series of books, published by Aerospace Publications Pty Ltd.

The soft-cover 64 page full colour book contains 90 colour and black and white photographs and is available through the publishers, Sierra Publishing, PO Box 8137 Ferntree Gully, Victoria 3156 or on its website (www.sierraaustralia.com) for \$29.95 including p&p.

On the Internet

The Spirits of Ansett

(www.spiritsofansett.com)

This site is dedicated to all those who worked for Guinea Airways, Ansett Australia and its subsidiaries in South Australia. It contains several interesting articles about Ansett and its demise along with a history of Airlines of South Australia.

Flarose Pty Ltd

(www.flarose.com.au)

This company provides a vast amount of aviation merchandise on-line. In particular, it has for sale a number of Ansett models, tee shirts, caps and other memorabilia.

Digger History

(www.diggerhistory.info)

This is the main site of three associated with the unofficial history of the Australian and New Zealand Armed Services. This first site contains the master index, military history, uniforms, air power, army, navy and weapons, to name but few. There are also many links to other military historical and contemporary sites.

Digger History 2 (www.diggerhistory2.info) contains a number of E-books featuring Australian Military in both World Wars and those thereafter.

Digger History 3 (www.diggerhistory3.info) also features some interesting E-books including *Daredevils of the Skies*, by Norman Ellison, *Coastal Command: The RAF in the Battle of the Seas 1939-42*, *RAAF 1921-1971: Golden Years of the RAAF*, and *They Wrote it Themselves – A book of the WAAAF*.

The Aircraft of Air America

(www.utdallas.edu/library/collections/speccoll/Leecker/index3.html)

During a recent visit to Thailand, I was fortunate to meet with a locally based air charter operator, who in an earlier life flew with the C.I.A. Whilst he would not give away too much information about which "airline" he flew with, we discussed much of the flying done by C.I.A. airlines in south-east Asia during the Vietnam War. One of its many airlines was Air America and this web-site provides an extraordinary amount of information about the airline and its history.

The CIA's Airlines: Logistic Air Support in the War in Laos 1954 – 1975

(www.vietnam.ttu.edu/airamerica/best/)

My acquaintance in Thailand also spoke about the CIA's involvement in Cambodia and Laos; the war in the latter has often been called a "secret war". This is certainly a fair description in comparison with media coverage of the neighbouring war in Vietnam but in recent years a number of books and a controversial film have helped to throw some light on this war and the role of US airlines in providing communications and logistical air support to the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the US Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA's) forces in Laos.

The main article on the web-site attempts to compile the fleet lists of the principal airlines responsible for providing this logistical air support in Southeast Asia. Fascinating stuff!

Calendar of Events

27-28 September 2008 Antique Aeroplane Association of Australia Chipmunk Rally. Parkes NSW

4 October 2008 Lunch with the Tiger Moths. Luskintyre NSW

4 October 2008 Rathmines Catalina Festival, Rathmines NSW (seaplane flypast and alighting 10.00 and Tiger Moth flypast 14.30)

4-5 October 2008 Australian Defence Force Air Show. Amberley Qld

4-6 October 2008 Arthur Butler Memorial Fly-in. Tooraweenah NSW

4-6 October 2008 NSW Aerobatic Championships. Temora NSW

11-12 October 2008 Temora Aviation Museum Flying Days. Temora NSW

18-19 October 2008 Rotors, Wings & Wheels – Museum of Australian Army Flying. Oakey Qld

19 October 2008 Hoxton Park Airport Wake. Hoxton Park NSW. Commences 12.00; HOX ceases operations on 27 October 2008

25 October 2008 Kyeema Memorial Service. Mt Dandenong VIC. Commemorating the 70th anniversary of ANA's DC-2 VH-UYC Kyeema disaster at Mt Dandenong.

25-26 October 2008 Fleet Air Arm Diamond Jubilee Air Show. Nowra NSW

26 October 2008 Canberra Airport Open Day. Canberra ACT

1-2 November 2008 Aircraft Model, Memorabilia and Paraphernalia Show. Passenger Terminal Bankstown Airport NSW.

9 November 2008 NSW Sport Aircraft Club Open Day. Wedderburn NSW

9 November 2008 Wings and Wheels Open Day. Mittagong NSW

3 December 2008 AHSA (NSW) Inc monthly meeting, Australian Aviation Museum Bankstown

Contributions and Contacts

News items, other contributions, or requests for information etc for inclusion in the newsletter can be sent to AHSA (NSW) at P.O. Box K346, Haymarket NSW 1238 or to Warwick Bigsworth, E-mail (madsen2010@optusnet.com.au) or (02) 8824 7814.

Thanks

Thanks to *Aviation Heritage*, Roger McDonald, Christina Mumford and John Scott for their contributions to this newsletter.

LOOPS AND LANDINGS

Inspired by John Kingsford-Smith

In Search of Bolivar - Part 5.

Another miracle happened at Bolivar. Fred Jones said that, after climbing through a height of sixty feet, the Bleriot suddenly dived to earth, "landing almost head on. There was a great crash, which attracted the attention of people a considerable distance away." If this really did happen, the miracle was that Fred Custance escaped with his life. Indeed it was said that he suffered only slight bruising and a bump on his head when he was thrown forward onto the petrol tank. Fred Jones was also, "scarcely concerned about the damage to his machine." There was a smashed propeller, wrecked undercarriage, and some damage to the forward fuselage, more consistent perhaps with the result of a ground loop or a heavy landing. Remarkably, both wings, the rear fuselage and tail were undamaged. Jones estimated that repairs would be completed in two weeks at a cost of about £50. The Bleriot was taken to the Adelaide coach builders, Duncan and Frazer, for assessment. It then became apparent that even when the undercarriage and front fuselage were repaired, the Bleriot could not be flown. The ever optimistic Jones had not seen the necessity for a spare propeller, and there was no expertise in Adelaide to make one. The Bleriot was placed in storage while Fred Jones pondered a solution to his problem.

On Tuesday afternoon of May 24, 1910, the Acting City Coroner, Dr R. S. Rogers, sat in Adelaide's Police Courthouse to conduct an investigation into the suspicious circumstances surrounding a fire in Gilles Arcade, Currie Street. Albert James Manuel, the lessee of Gilles Arcade and Livery Stables, gave evidence that on May 10 he had sublet space in his shed to Mr F. H. Jones for the storage of a large packing case which contained an aeroplane. Two days later he had seen Mr Jones in the street, and Jones had asked him about insurance. Albert Toombs, an employee at the arcade said that at about 9.30am to 10am, on May 17, he saw Mr Jones packing straw into the case containing the aeroplane. The case was subsequently nailed up by Jones. Herbert Biddle, ostler, another arcade employee, said that at about 11.50am, on May 19, he was asked for a tomahawk by Mr Jones, who was accompanied by another man. He heard Jones and his companion opening the case with the tomahawk. Charles Grabowsky, also employed by the arcade, said that at about 12 noon he had seen Jones and another man near the case. He observed a fire in the packing case containing the aeroplane at about 12.30pm. Thomas Linnane, a storeman employed next door, said that at 12.30pm he saw the case burning strongly, and that an oily substance, spreading across the floor away from the case, was also alight.

With circumstantial evidence like the foregoing, it might be assumed that the acting coroner would have no difficulty in coming to a reasonable conclusion about the cause of the fire which destroyed a valuable aeroplane and resulted in additional damage to Gilles Arcade. However, such an assumption would be made without hearing the evidence of Frederick Hooper Jones, who was a prominent Adelaide businessman, and a most persuasive witness. It was true, Jones said, that he had opened the packing case on the morning of May 17 to pack straw around the engine of his Bleriot XI. He had been advised that this was necessary to protect the engine from dampness, and he had the permission of his insurer to do so. He also confirmed that he had opened the packing case again at about 11.45am on May 19, shortly before the fire. His intention was to remove the aeroplane's accumulator. It was well known, he said, that if an accumulator was left for any length of time without charging, it became useless. Unfortunately he had nailed up the case again before discovering that he had inadvertently left the accumulator still inside. He said that his aeroplane was a valuable investment, because he had planned to conduct flying exhibitions with it all over Australia. He had no idea how the fire started. Jones said that he had originally insured his Bleriot for £750 with the Ocean Accident Company. He had recently cancelled that policy and, after being declined by five or six other companies, had eventually settled with the Commercial Union Insurance Company to insure the Bleriot for £500. Finally, John E. Dickie, Deputy Superintendent of Fire Brigades, said that when he

arrived at the fire, it was too far advanced for him to form any opinion regarding its origin.

After two hours of deliberation, Dr Rogers found that there was no evidence to show how the fire started. The role of the combination of a potential spark - creating accumulator, straw and a large quantity of flammable fluid, in the close proximity of a highly combustible airframe, seems not to have carried much weight with the acting coroner. M. Poirot, had he been on the case, might have determined the part played by the mysterious companion of Fred Jones, and why the pair absented themselves from the arcade shortly before the fire was observed by others. M. Poirot might also have clarified the reason for Jones raising the matter of insurance with Albert Manuel, just one week before the fire. Perhaps the reason was a considerate nudge and wink to warn Manuel about what was to come. As it happened Manuel's insurance policy had lapsed two weeks earlier, and he failed to renew it. Thus, when the fire spread from the aeroplane case on May 19, his loss, consisting of a number of traps and a drag valued at £300, was uninsured. It would not be the first time, or the last, that a convenient fire had helped recoup some of the losses of a failed venture. However, it was the first time in Australia involving an aeroplane.

Fred Jones emerged from his costly failure to introduce aviation to South Australia with his reputation relatively intact. He had turned disaster into triumph with his story of the miraculous achievements of Fred Custance at Bolivar, and had been believed by journalists eager to report the sensational news. He had faced an enquiry into the cause of a fire in Gilles Arcade, apparently without any adverse findings against him. No doubt he resumed his normal business activities as an importer and agent. The viability of this kind of business would have suffered as the trading constraints of the Great War took effect. During 1916 Fred Jones left Adelaide, and moved with his family to Melbourne to seek new opportunities.

By 1943, Australia was deeply engaged in a second Great War. Towards the end of that year our daily papers were reporting success on the Italian Front, the Eastern Front, in the Pacific and in the air over Europe. This was tempered by daily publication of lists of the names of servicemen killed or missing in action. The *Week-End Magazine*, a supplement with *The Argus* each Saturday in Melbourne, contained a high proportion of morale boosting articles relating to Australia's involvement in the war, with particular focus on the heroic deeds of our airmen. The editor of the magazine planned to commemorate the fortieth anniversary of the Wright Brothers' first powered flight at Kitty Hawk, with a major article on Saturday December 18, one day after the actual date. In the meantime he introduced a weekly series named "The Romance of Flying" as a chronological history of flight leading up to the Wright Brothers acknowledgement. The first in the series, on September 25, told the story of Daedalus and Icarus. This story is based on Ancient Greek mythology. Not inappropriate, considering another story about Australian aviation history, also based on mythology, that was to appear in the magazine in a few weeks time.

The eighth in "The Romance of Flying" series, on the history of parachutes, appeared on November 6. Adjacent to it was a notice that, in a separate series, an article about Wing Commander B. L. Duigan DSO DFC and Bar would appear on the following Saturday. Brian Duigan was a nephew of John Duigan, the first to build and fly a powered aeroplane in Australia. One can imagine Fred Jones, now living in Melbourne, and perhaps a devoted reader of the *Week-End Magazine*, becoming increasingly interested as "The Romance of Flying" articles triggered memories of his own past association with aviation. When the magazine was approaching its commemoration of the miracle of powered flight, and Brian Duigan was being hailed as a famous scion of a famous family because of the Australian connection with powered flight, it was too much for the irrepressible Fred Jones. He contacted *The Argus* with his own story to tell.

Stanley Brogden, at the time freelancing to *The Argus*, conducted an interview with Fred Jones whom he found at the Victoria Barracks HQ in the Lines of Communication Area. Jones was wearing a Staff-Sergeant's uniform. But how was it that Jones, now well into his 65th year, was a member of the Australian Military Forces? No problem - he had simply advanced the date of his birth by eight years. But this small adjustment of fact was nothing when compared with his new and enhanced story about Bolivar. A story that made no mention of the long deceased Fred Custance. **John Scott.**



AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW) Inc

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Southern Skies

The Newsletter of AHSA (NSW) Inc

November 2008 No.423

November Meeting

Arthur Butler Memorial Lecture

The November meeting will be held at the Powerhouse Museum on Wednesday 5th November 2008, at 7.45pm. Enter from the Macarthur Street end and the meeting room is adjacent to the foyer. Visitors are most welcome and supper will be available after the meeting.

The meeting will be the 26th annual Arthur Butler Memorial Lecture and we are privileged to have as Guest Speaker Dr Ron Yates AM, whose subject will be:

My Career in Aviation

Ron Yates graduated from the University of Sydney in 1944 as an aeronautical engineer and then served for three years in the RAAF as a flight test engineer. He then joined the flight operations department of Qantas and had a career in the airline spanning 40 years. He played a pivotal role in the evaluation and selection of several post-war aircraft, and was the project manager of the acquisition and introduction into service of the Lockheed Electra, Boeing 707, 747 and 767.

He rose through the ranks to become Chief Executive Officer and he retired in 1986, although he continued as a Technical Consultant until 1993.

In June 1993, he was appointed a Member in the General Division of the Order of Australia for services to aviation.

Mr Yates was the catalyst in the Government's establishment of the Federal Airports Corporation and was its founding Deputy Chairman. He was appointed to the Board of the Civil Aviation Authority in 1990. Since 1991, he has been an Executive Councillor of the International Federation of Airworthiness, and has been an Executive Councillor of the Australian Division of the Royal Aeronautical Society since 1975 and served as President for two terms. He is currently a member of the Board of the Flight Safety Foundation.

In 2000, he was awarded an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Engineering by the University of Sydney.

Also expected to be in attendance is Anna Yeats (daughter of Arthur Butler) who will have copies of

the revised edition of *Flight to a Lady* and Arthur Butler's long awaited autobiography for sale.

Members are requested to bring a small plate of finger food for supper afterwards.

Please join us for this highlight of our annual meeting calendar.

October Meeting

Guest speaker was John Ulm, who gave a biographical talk about his late father, Charles Ulm, whom he referred to as CTP.

John gave a delightful account of his growing up years and how he first remembered his father. CTP and John's mother had divorced and John did not get to know his father before the famous Pacific flight in 1928. However John became a welcome visitor to his father's house in Dover Heights and at Mascot airport, where CTP carried out regular "Joy Flights".

John was at school at Chatswood when the news came that CTP was missing in Airspeed Envoy VH-UXY "*Stella Australis*" en-route from Oakland, California to Honolulu. He recalled how neighbours and passers-by touched him, when the sad news became known.

John discussed a number of issues about his father; of note, was that CTP was not about racing or attempting to break world records, but rather trying to prove the viability of air travel. He noted that 2008 marks the 75th anniversary of the flight by Avro K VH-UXX *Faith in Australia* from Richmond NSW to Heston, near London. Ulm, along with Scotty Allen and PG Taylor, set off for England with the aim to demonstrate their ability to provide a viable alternative to compete for the England - Australia air mail service.

His research has been greatly assisted by access to the personal notes and records of Ellen Rogers, who also wrote the book, *Faith in Australia: Charles Ulm and Australian Aviation*. It was Ellen Rogers who expressed concern about the proposed monument commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Pacific crossing by the *Southern Cross* to be erected in Brisbane in 1958. She wrote to Members of Parliament complaining that the monument was to be in "Smithy's" name with no mention at all of Ulm,

Lyon or Warner. It was found that the public fund to support the monument was in Smithy's name only, but the action did eventually set the record straight.

It was only on the prompting by John Ulm that Harry Lyon and Jim Warner were invited to the ceremony. It was at that time that Harry Lyon stated: "...that if it hadn't been for Charlie Ulm, we'd never have got into the air."

The bureaucracy struck again when there was a fund launched to construct a flying replica of the *Southern Cross*. The accompanying brochure only made reference to Sir Charles Kingsford Smith, and after a complaint by John, a new brochure was produced, which included the names of the rest of the crew.

John noted other occasions where his father would be better remembered, but other events intervened. It was proposed that the new international terminal building at Sydney (Kingsford Smith) Airport would be named the Charles Ulm Terminal, however, when various names were then suggested for the new Melbourne Airport at Tullamarine, Prime Minister John Gorton decreed that no names would be placed on such buildings. Perhaps it has been resolved in a small way by the main administration building at Sydney Airport in Link Road being named the Charles Ulm Building.

John spoke further about his desire to ensure the name of his father is always remembered in Australian history; John has generously donated many of his research notes and findings, along with those of Ellen Rogers to the State Library of NSW, and some of his own and his father's papers to the National Library of Australia. *(For those with internet access, the many photographs in these collections can be found on the respective web-sites. Ed)*

John concluded his talk by a re-creation of what might have happened to the *Stella Australis* on its final flight.

And of course, there were many questions about his own wartime experiences; we have invited him back on another occasion to talk about these in more detail.

Australian War Memorial – New Exhibition

The Australian War Memorial's new permanent exhibition *Over the Front: The Great War in the Air* opens on 28th November, 2008. This exhibition features five rare First World War aircraft including three Australian types (SE5a fighter, Aircro DH9 bomber, Avro 504K trainer) and two German fighters (Albatros D. Va and Pfalz D.XII), along with photographs, uniforms, medals, personal items including Manfred von Richthofen's flying boots.

The exhibition will also bring to life the story of military flight and aerial combat in an exciting sound and light show.

A380 Aircraft Named

On 30 September 2008 Qantas honoured Australian pioneer aviatrix Nancy-Bird Walton at a ceremony to officially name the airline's first A380 aircraft after her. The CEO of Qantas, Mr Geoff Dixon, said Nancy-Bird was one of the legends of Australia's aviation history, and the airline was proud to recognise her contribution to the industry. "I am delighted that Nancy-Bird has agreed to have this first A380 named in her honour," he said. "Nancy-Bird's courage, resilience and optimism represent the very best of Australia. Her story tells us of the rich aviation legacy this nation enjoys and which Qantas draws upon today.

"It is a remarkable story both in its own right, and for the way Nancy-Bird's life interweaves with the origins of Australian aviation." Mr Dixon said Nancy-Bird was a pioneer of women pilots in Australia; the first woman to command a commercial aircraft and the founder of the Australian Women's Pilots Association. "Nancy-Bird began learning to fly in 1933, when she was just 17 years old, right here at Mascot.

She was taught by the world's greatest aviator, Sir Charles Kingsford Smith, and graduated in 1935. "Since then, Nancy-Bird has been a tireless campaigner for women in aviation. She showed us the potential for talented Australian women and the extraordinary influence that one bright individual can exert – and most of all, the sheer joy of flying." Mr Dixon said the entire Qantas A380 fleet would be named after Australian aviation pioneers, including Charles Kingsford Smith, Reg Ansett, Hudson Fysh, Bert Hinkler, and the inventor of the Black Box Flight Recorder, David Warren. The full list of names would be announced on Qantas' 88th birthday on 16 November 2008.

Restorations

Keith White has kindly provided a copy of the latest copy of the B-24 Liberator Memorial Restoration Fund Newsletter.

B-24 Liberator

It is pleasing to see progress being made on the restoration; the cockpit instrument panel restoration is now complete, as is the front fuselage structure. Work is progressing on the rear fuselage and the lower section.

For more information on progress of the project, visit the website (<http://b24australia.org.au>).

Avro Lincoln

The Moorabbin Air Museum has acquired an ex-RAF Lincoln airframe, complete except for the nose section. It has been proposed that this restoration might be done by the B-24 Restoration group when the work of the Liberator is complete, and if the Moorabbin Aviation Museum does not have sufficient room to display the Lincoln, it could possibly be displayed with the Liberator.

Avro Anson

Also under restoration in Victoria is an Avro Anson at Ballarat Airport. The fuselage is complete and ready for fabric covering, whilst the wings are yet to be built – from scratch!

DC-4

The Historical Aircraft Restoration Society (HARS) has acquired the ex-Pacific Air Freighters DC-4 VH-PAF after it was donated by Russell Broadbent. The DC-4 requires some repair work before it can be ferried to Albion Park, however after further TLC, it will have passenger seats installed and enter the historical flying fleet.

Vale

Stanley Brogden OAM

Readers will be saddened by the passing of the doyen of Australian aviation writers, Stanley Brogden who died on 14th September 2008 at the age of 94.

He wrote some 22 books including novels and travelogues. But he is perhaps best noted for his books on aviation, including the definitive *Australia's Two Airline Policy* (published by Melbourne University Press in 1968), which explained the policies of successive Australian Governments which ensured the continuation of the successful duopoly of TAA and Ansett-ANA. One of his other prominent aviation books was *The History of Australian Aviation*, (The Hawthorne Press, 1960), which no doubt resides on most of our bookshelves. Unfortunately, this book does contain several inaccuracies, which although portrayed as fact, are indeed pure fiction. (See this month's *Loops & Landings*. Ed)

Stanley Brogden was born in Malta in 1913, and later his family moved to Canada. At the age of 12, his family moved to New Zealand and seven years later he sailed to England. He was a freelance writer for several magazines as well as the *Sunday Express* and *London Evening News*. He arrived in Australia in 1939 and wrote for newspapers, *The Bulletin* and *The Australian Journal*. In July 1941 he was called up for Army service and by 1943 was a Sergeant and in line for a commission. Instead, he was transferred to the

RAAF as a Flying Officer and helped launch *Wings* magazine.

Tommy White, former WWI pilot and now Minister for Air and Civil Aviation appointed Brogden as aviation advisor, before the RAAF Chief, Air Marshall Sir George Jones made him head of RAAF Public relations, with a substantive rank of Group Captain.

It was while he was Head of RAAF PR that he noticed during newsreel footage of the Korean War that 77 Squadron's aircraft did not have an easily recognisable national symbol, as they retained RAF roundels. Brogden suggested that the kangaroo be placed in the roundels on both sides of the fuselage to clearly identify the aircraft as Australian and the idea was accepted. However, it was not until mid-1956 that the kangaroo was formally incorporated into the roundel.

Brogden was befriended by many leaders in aviation, including Donald Douglas in the USA, Geoffrey de Havilland in England and Ernst Heinkel in Germany. The German WWII ace Adolf Galland gave Brogden memorabilia which he in turn passed on to the Australian War Memorial. He was also highly regarded by Sir Hudson Fysh and Sir Reg Ansett.

Brogden was the first aviation writer for *The Australian* and the *Australian Financial Review*. He was the initial editor of *Australian Flying* magazine and *Aviation News*, the latter of which was absorbed into *Aircraft* magazine, with which Brogden was associated for many years.

In April 1993, after he had completed 50 years of specialist writing, he said of himself "Nobody ever came into half a century of professional work with such a complete lack of qualifications as this writer...he had never been in an aircraft, never wanted to be in one, and was closer to Luddite principles than the admiration of complicated machinery."

For all his countless flights, Brogden apparently hated flying. Towards the end of his career, his colleagues enjoyed waiting for yet another excuse to avoid having to fly.

He is survived by his late wife's nieces and nephews. (Additional input SMH)

On the Internet

Flying Boat Wreckage Site
(www.museum.wa.gov.au/collections/maritime/march/falle_nangels/broome.doc)

This site is a Paper on Documentation of Places for the entry in the Register of heritage Places. It provides detailed material on the significance of the site which was where in 1942 there was an aerial

attack by the Japanese on 15 moored flying boats. It is quite lengthy, but incredibly fascinating reading.

Seawings – The Flying Boat Website
(www.seawings.co.uk)

This claims to be the largest flying boat reference website in the world – and the home of the flying boat in detail, on the web. It specialises in providing information for the scale modeller, historian and enthusiast in the form of photographs, plans and articles. There is also a forum for those who like to exchange information and views.

Old CMP Site
(www.oldcmp.net)

This heritage website is dedicated to the research, preservation and restoration of Canadian Military Pattern and other vehicles and aircraft used by the British Commonwealth forces during World War II, and what has happened to them since 1945.

The aircraft section has some excellent photographs and information.

12 o’Clock High Forum
(<http://forum.12oclockhigh.net>)

This site is the Luftwaffe and Allied air Forces discussion forum which includes major topics such as Luftwaffe and Axis Air Forces, Allied and Soviet Air Forces, Japanese and Allied Air Forces in the Far East, Pre-World War II Military and Naval Aviation, Post-World War II Military and Naval Aviation. You can just browse, or register and then ask questions.

Royal New Zealand Air Force History
(www.nzetc.org/tm/scholarly/tei-WH2AirF.html)

This site from the New Zealand Electronic Text Centre provides a detailed history of the RNZAF up until the end of World War II. The author is John Ross and he provides excellent text, images and links.

Help Wanted

Roger McDonald has passed on two requests of which members may be able to assist.

Canegrass Station, South Australia

Julia Patten is researching an aircraft accident from 50 years ago and is hoping someone can help. Apparently back in the '40s, '50s or '60s when the Radford family owned Canegrass, one Christmas Day Mr Radford's brother took the Radford children for a fly in his Tiger Moth and they crashed and everyone was killed. The local rumours say that they took off from the Canegrass airstrip but other rumours are that it happened on another property in the district.

Julia would love any information regarding this accident. There will be a major Canegrass celebration

next year and family and friends are currently researching the complete history of Canegrass. Contact Julia at: (08) 8239 1226 or 0419 169 279. Email: julia.patten@gwizzyachting.com.au

“Flight into Hell” TV series

From Malcolm Cole: “For many years now I have been searching for a copy of this Australian TV series which, as you probably know, is based on the book by Hans Bertram and tells of his attempted flight around the world in 1932 and his 52 days lost in the Timor Sea.

I have tried many contacts in Australia, including the screenwriter for the series, in my attempts to find a copy but so far, in vain. It was commercially released on video in 2002 (not in the UK, I think) but is now out of print and doesn't seem to turn up anywhere for sale second-hand (E-Bay etc). Is it possible that your society, or one of its members, could help me or point me in the way of other possible sources?

I would be immensely grateful for any help you could offer me. I look forward to your reply to: Malcolm Cole (Colemaldil@aol.com)”.

Calendar of Events

1-2 November 2008 Aircraft Model, Memorabilia and Paraphernalia Show. Passenger Terminal Bankstown Airport NSW.

1-2 November 2008 Red Bull Air Race. Swan River, Perth WA

9 November 2008 NSW Sport Aircraft Club Open Day. Wedderburn NSW

9 November 2008 Wings and Wheels Open Day. Mittagong NSW

3 December 2008 AHSA (NSW) Inc monthly meeting, Australian Aviation Museum Bankstown

6 December 2008 Lunch with the Tiger Moths. Luskintyre NSW

2-5 January 2009 The Great Eastern Fly-in. Evans Head NSW

22 February 2009 Wings Over Illawarra. Albion Park NSW

10-15 March 2009 Australian International Air Show. Avalon Vic

Contributions and Contacts

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Thanks

Thanks to Roger McDonald, John Scott and Keith White for their contributions to this newsletter.

LOOPS AND LANDINGS

Inspired by John Kingsford-Smith

In Search of Bolivar - Part 6.

Stanley Brogden died in Melbourne on September 14, 2008. He was born in Valetta, Malta, on September 19, 1913. He received his education at schools in the United Kingdom, Canada and New Zealand. Stanley pursued an acting career in New Zealand which led him to the London Stage and into films from 1931 to 1934. During the remaining years before WWII he worked as a freelance journalist in London, Canada and back in New Zealand. In 1940 he joined the Australian Army, serving in the 10th Field Ambulance, A.A.M.C. By 1943 he had been transferred to the Australian Army Education Service. In November 1943, he absorbed his first lesson in Australian aviation history at the feet of one of our earliest pioneers - Frederick Hooper Jones.

Stanley Brogden reported the interview in a 1500 word, six column article in *The Argus* on November 20, 1943, under the headline, THE MAN WHO FLEW THE FIRST MONOPLANE IN AUSTRALIA. There was an accompanying photograph of the pioneer pilot, "Staff-Sgt F. H. Jones as he is today." In the article Jones claims that from being, "introduced by Bleriot, he knew Cody, the Wrights, Curtiss, Grahame-White, Latham and Farman." More importantly, Jones also claimed that he was taught to fly by Bleriot. "If there is anybody else in Australia who was taught to fly by Bleriot he ought to meet Mr Jones for a yarn about old times. The conversation should make a good story." The article went on to describe how, at Bolivar, spectators watched the field night and day. "Then the Bleriot flew. Mr Jones went up early in the morning, took it to a height of between 12 and 15 ft, and flew 3 times around the field - about 3 miles. This took about 5 min 25 sec." The article ended without mention of Fred Custance or Bill Wittber.

It wasn't long before the article reached the eyes of Fred Custance's widow Edith, who was then also living in Melbourne. She wrote a letter to the editor in which she said: "An article in *The Argus* on 20 November describes the first flight of a monoplane in Australia in which Staff-Sergeant F. H. Jones, who imported the plane, is purported to claim to have flown the machine. No mention is made of the man who piloted it and made the pioneering achievement possible. I have numerous newspaper cuttings from *The Adelaide Advertiser* and *The Register* which give graphic descriptions of what was then considered a noteworthy achievement, duly emphasising the part played by my late husband F. C. Custance, in hazarding the task of piloting the Bleriot with only aeronautical books to guide him."

Fred Jones was unfazed as he replied to the "please explain" from the editor of *The Argus*. Jones wrote: "Mr Custance helped to service the Bleriot after it arrived in Adelaide and had made several short flights in it. I have the highest regard for Mr Custance and do not wish to deprive him from any credit due to him, but the fact remains that I bought, imported and flew the Bleriot." If nothing else Stanley Brogden must have been bemused by Fred Jones. He had been told a wonderful story about early powered flight in Europe and South Australia, made more colourful by the addition of pure fantasy here and there. Was this article the first about aviation written by Brogden at the start of his long and illustrious career as an aviation journalist? At about this time he transferred to the RAAF as a Flight Lieutenant to assist with editing *Wings* magazine, and was later Director of Public Relations for the RAAF from 1950 to 1959, serving with the rank of Group Captain. And from the end of WWII he worked on his book, 'The History of Australian Aviation'. The dust jacket explains that: "This is the first full history of Australian aviation. Published in the Fiftieth Anniversary Year of Australian flying - the first powered flights here were in 1910 - the book has a background of considerable research. Much of the book has never appeared in any other reference work." The book was published by Melbourne's Hawthorn Press in 1960.

When writing about Bolivar, in 'The History of Australian Aviation', Brogden accepts the version outlined by Edith Custance in her letter to *The Argus*. Ironically, this version is the original Fred Jones fabrication, which Fred Custance agreed to go along with, and which his future wife, Edith,

believed to be the truth. However, there was one myth about Jones and his Bleriot that was not of his making, and to which he had a particular aversion. He would have been devastated, had he been alive, to find this myth perpetuated as fact in Stanley Brogden's, 'The History of Australian Aviation'. Telling the story of the Bleriot after its crash at Bolivar, Brogden wrote: "The aircraft was repaired in Adelaide. When another flight was attempted an enthusiastic youngster came too close and lost an arm in collision with the propeller. Jones was so upset by this that he put the Bleriot into store, where it was destroyed in a fire." The details of the accident at Cheltenham Racecourse on July 23, 1910, when a sixteen year old, Ewart Lock, lost his right hand after being hit by an out of control Bleriot, are outlined in *Loops and Landings*, August 2007. The Bleriot concerned in the accident was owned by Lawrence Adamson. Fred Jones believed that his reputation was being sullied by association with this tragedy. His last attempt to correct the myth came after an article by H. A. Lindsay in *The Advertiser* in May, 1957, yet again connecting him to the accident at Cheltenham Racecourse, was drawn to his attention. Correspondence between Jones and the author of the article followed, as did correspondence between Jones and Bill Wittber. In a letter to Bill Wittber dated July 8, 1957, Jones reveals the depth of the injustice he was feeling. And perhaps he also felt that it was time to enlist his old friend in the correction of the other myth about Custance's exemplary first flight at Bolivar. The relevant extract from the Jones letter to Wittber follows.

"I don't know where Lindsay stands re *Advertiser* office and I have written to them this day asking if he is a member of their staff, at the same time pointing out incorrect statements published - particularly where my plane was responsible for cutting off a boy's arm. So I hope to hear from them in a day or so and will pass on the information to you. The address I wrote to Lindsay was: H. A. Lindsay, 110 Cross Road, Highgate, South Aust. Please confine your letters to him if possible away from my Bleriot as I intend shaking him and so don't want our letters to clash in any way. Poor old Custance is gone, but you and I know all about that mythical flight, three times around the paddock etc by him, but we can discuss this a little later on and perhaps personally as I'll be making a trip over there shortly I hope." Unfortunately that hoped for reunion with Bill Wittber never did take place. Fred Jones died at St Kilda, Melbourne, early in 1958, shortly before his seventy ninth birthday.

The extent to which the record of early Australian aviation history is unsatisfactory is as much the fault of our early pioneers as it is the historians who have attempted to make sense of the material available to them for research. The part of Stanley Brogden's book, 'The History of Australian Aviation', that deals with the events of 1909 and 1910 is unsatisfactory because of the errors embedded in the sources he depended upon. When the book was reviewed in *The Sydney Morning Herald* on August 7, 1960, by the then doyen of Australian aviation writers, Jack Percival, it was those two seminal years, of the origins of powered flight in Australia, that occupied the whole review. Under the headline, "IT'S OUR FIFTIETH YEAR OF POWERED AVIATION", Jack Percival wrote the following at the start of his review.

"No special celebration is planned to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the first flight in a powered aeroplane in Australia. The feat was achieved some time in 1910, but the experts can't agree to whom the honour should be given for the first 'true' flight. Adding to the controversy of who did it first, a book has just been published in Melbourne which, the author claims, is the first full history of aviation in Australia. The author, Stanley Brogden, a former Group Captain and until recently, Director of Public Relations for the Royal Australian Air Force, claims that a mechanic named Custance was the first Australian to fly in his own country a plane fitted with an engine. This contention will upset a lot of people who have given credit for this historic achievement to others."

Fred Custance was born in England and did not come to Australia until 1906. Thus it would be difficult to claim him as an Australian. In any case, Stanley Brogden would have been contacted by many readers of his book challenging the whole Bolivar story. In 1967, he had an opportunity to reappraise the Bolivar story in a publication called "Commercial Aviation - Around Australia Program". He then wrote: "Many people claim that Custance was the first man to fly in Australia. In assessing this claim it must be considered that Custance had never flown before, that he had no proper control of his machine, and that the flight was not witnessed by any independent authority."-- Amen...**John Scott.**



AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW) Inc

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Southern Skies

The Newsletter of AHS (NSW) Inc

December 2008 No.424

December Meeting

The December meeting will be held at the Australian Aviation Museum Bankstown on Wednesday 3rd December 2008, at 7.45pm. Enter via Starkie Drive, near the Milperra Road entrance to Bankstown Airport. Visitors are most welcome and supper will be available after the meeting.

The theme for the evening will be the Scottish Aviation Twin Pioneer. The guest speaker will be Sy Allsep, who owns the Twin Pioneer under restoration at the Museum, as well as an airworthy model, VH-EVB. Sy will describe the operations of the Twin Pioneer and his plans for the airworthy example. Members and guests will be able to look over the museum's Twin Pioneer as well as other exhibits at the Museum.

The Twin Pioneer, or "Twin Pin" as it is often known, was designed as a civil and military STOL transport, capable of carrying 16 passengers plus a crew of 2. The Series 1 was powered by two 540hp Alvis Leonides engines; the Series 2 was powered by two 600hp Pratt & Whitney R-1340 engines, and the Series 3 powered by a pair of 640hp Alvis Leonides 531 engines. Depending on which source one reads, there were 89, 91 or 94 of the type constructed, with the major operator being the Royal Air Force. Another major military operator was the Royal Malayan Air Force and it was from this source that several aircraft were sold in Australia for civil conversion. Only two of these aircraft made it onto the Register, VH-EVA, which was quickly on-sold in Alaska, and VH-EVB, which has had several owners and operators since it was first registered here in January 1982.

Two other Twin Pioneers have been registered in Australia; VH-BHJ, a Series 1 aircraft operated for BHP subsidiary Australian Iron and Steel, and which was destroyed by a cyclone on Koolan Island, in Yampi Sound Western Australia on Christmas Eve, 1960 and VH-AIS a Series 3 and replacement aircraft for VH-BHJ. VH-AIS is in storage, last reported in Southern Queensland.

Members are invited to bring along any Twin Pin photographs or memorabilia. Please join us for this final meeting of the year.

November Meeting

The meeting was the 26th annual Arthur Butler Memorial Lecture and we were most privileged to have as Guest Speaker Dr Ron Yates AM, whose subject was *My Career in Aviation*.

Ian Debenham welcomed the guests who included Anna Yeats, the daughter of Arthur Butler, and her son Matthew; Jan Robertson, one of the organisers of the recent Tooraweenah Fly-in where Arthur Butler was honoured; and, a number of Ron's former Qantas colleagues.

Ron introduced his lecture with an acknowledgement of Arthur Butler's contribution to Australian aviation, and stated that he considered Butler as one of the true pioneers of the industry.

Ron Yates was born in 1923 and grew up in the Depression. During World War I his father had been in the AIF in France and after the war had returned to his trade as a butcher. Ron claimed that he got to know a lot about sausages from his father's business, but at the same time he excelled at school in the subjects of mathematics and chemistry. It was recommended that he pursue a career in engineering and at university he was one of a small group that studied aeronautics.

He graduated from the University of Sydney in 1944 as an aeronautical engineer and then joined the RAAF, where he learnt to fly the DH-82A at Narromine. Later, he transferred to the Performance Unit (the then equivalent of ARDU) as a flight test engineer. During his time in the RAAF, he was assigned to visit Qantas to assist with the civil certification of its Lancastrians. He also assisted in the JATO tests on Qantas Catalinas.

As a result of his involvement with Qantas, he was invited by Arthur Baird to join the Qantas Engineering Department, but following his release from the RAAF, he initially joined Qantas Operations at the request of Lester Brain. The Engineering Department subsequent got its way and Ron went to that area, where one of his first assignments was to produce Weight and Balance charts for the Liberators. He flew to London on the first Lockheed L-749 Constellation service and was tasked to resolve

the problems associated with the troublesome Wright Cyclone engines.

One issue that he addressed was to design a device on the Lancastrians to carry a replacement Constellation engine when unserviceability occurred along the route. In 1952, Ron was sent to Lockheed to oversee construction of the L-1049 Super Constellation as customer's representative. He recalled the frequent lunches and meetings with "Kelly" Johnson, of the "Skunk Works", but was blissfully unaware of the affairs of that then clandestine section of Lockheed.

Following the L-1049 project, he was assigned to investigate medium range turbo-prop types, which included the Vickers Vanguard and Lockheed Electra. The Electra was acquired, although the type suffered two fatal accidents in the USA which were found to be caused by an "engine whirl" problem. Ron was sent back to Lockheed to assist in the resolution of the problem, which had been caused by a reduction of weight programme during the design phase. All Electras either delivered or on the production line were required to have added bracing and stiffeners to the engine mounts and nacelle structure, plus additional new supports within the wing itself. And, new heavier gauge wing skin was also applied; a most expensive exercise.

Ron was then tasked to assist in the evaluation of new types for Qantas. He accompanied Scotty Allen on this tour and they assessed the Bristol Britannia, DH Comet, Douglas DC-8 and the Boeing 707. They also looked at engine manufacturers and the types on offer. But several weeks after his return, he was tasked to undertake a similar exercise along with Bert Ritchie. A critical airport was Nadi, Fiji which necessitated that the aircraft selected would need to perform in the hot conditions along with the relatively short runway. Eventually the B707 was selected, however Boeing had changed the original specifications and the now proposed lengthened fuselage affected performance to the extent as being unsuitable for Nadi. After much negotiation, a short fuselage version of the B707-120 series was ordered by Qantas (the B707-138 in Qantas service).

He was also involved in the evaluation of the Boeing 747, however soon after, he was offered a higher level in management as Chief Operating Officer. One of his first major challenges was in the "Mr Brown" bomb hoax affair, and he recalled how the police failed to intercept "Mr Brown", because they were delayed in the lift.

Ron went on to become the Chief Executive Officer, where he remained until his "retirement" in 1986. But Ron's intended retirement was short-lived; when approaching his retirement from Qantas, the then Minister for Transport, Peter Morris, appointed Ron to the Board of the Federal Airports Corporation

where he served for several years, and he was later appointed as deputy Chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority.

Ron is also a long-serving member of O'Connell Street Associates, a non-profit organization made up of ex-CEOs, who provide consultancy services.

Since 1991 he has been an Executive Councillor of the International Federation of Airworthiness, and since 1975 has been an Executive Councillor of the Australian Division of the Royal Aeronautical Society and has served as President for two terms. He is currently a member of the Board of the Flight Safety Foundation.

The Lecture ended only too quickly, for many of the issues that Ron raised might have justified a separate talk in their own right. It was indeed a most entertaining evening.

RAAF Lockheed C-130 Hercules 50 Years of Service

On the 1st and 2nd of November 2008 the Royal Australian Air Force celebrated fifty years of outstanding achievements by its enduring work horse, the C-130 Hercules aircraft.

Chief of Air Force, Air Marshal Mark Binskin said: "Various models of Hercules aircraft have been the backbone of many of the Australian Defence Force's most important operations during the past 50 years. The Hercules have provided combat air lift capability, including tactical transport of troops and cargo as well as Special Forces insertion, parachuting and air drops. In marking 50 years of C-130 service, we recognise the dedication of the thousands of air crew, ground and support personnel and contractors who have worked hard to fly and maintain the Hercules in Australia and in deployed locations around the world."

"In recent years, our C-130 Hercules have seen more active duty than any other aircraft in the RAAF. This service has been widely appreciated across the ADF. Today three RAAF Hercules are based in the Middle East, and continue to provide vital air lift support to Australian and Coalition forces," Air Marshal Binskin said.

Some of the more memorable achievements include service during the Vietnam War, the emergency response to Cyclone Tracy, the Katherine floods, the Boxing Day tsunami and the Bali bombings.

The C-130 fleet ran regular services to Vietnam during that war and most importantly conducted medevacs of ill and wounded service personnel. They were also tasked with refugee relief at the end of the conflict.

In 2005, the C-130s delivered humanitarian assistance to the hundreds of thousands of people affected by the Boxing Day tsunami and they brought

home the Australians injured in the Bali bombings in 2002.

The C-130 Hercules began service with the RAAF in 1958, with the arrival of twelve C-130A models. The success of this acquisition was followed in 1966 with twelve C-130E models. Twelve C-130 H models arrived in 1978 to replace the 20 year old A model and the latest version, the C-130 J model, arrived to replace the E model in 1999. RAAF currently has a fleet of 24 C-130s, comprising J and H models.

While the C-130 has undergone several modifications over the past 50 years, its fuselage shape has largely remained unchanged.

The 50th anniversary celebrations included a flypast of Sydney, and a reunion at RAAF Richmond.

Courtesy ADF Media

Qantas A380 Aircraft

Members will already be aware that Qantas' first Airbus A380 aircraft VH-OQA has been named the *Nancy-Bird Walton*. Another nineteen A380s are on order and all will be named after other Australian aviation pioneers. Two of these will be delivered later this year. The list as released by Qantas is:

- VH-OQA *Nancy-Bird Walton* – the first woman to fly a commercial aviation service in Australia.
- VH-OQB *Hudson Fysh* – one of the founders of Qantas and the airline's first Managing Director.
- VH-OQC *Paul McGinness* – one of the founders of Qantas.
- VH-OQD *Fergus McMaster* – one of the founders of Qantas and the first Chairman of the Company.
- VH-OQE *Lawrence Hargrave* – inventor of the box kite, linking four of these together in 1894 to fly 16 ft.
- VH-OQF *Charles Kingsford Smith* – Australia's most famous aviator, who made the first trans-Pacific flight from the USA to Australia in 1928, and founded Australian National Airways Limited.
- VH-OQG *Charles Ulm* – Co-pilot, on Kingsford Smith's record-breaking trans-Pacific flight between the USA and Australia in 1928 and co-founder of Australian National Airways Limited.
- VH-OQH *Reginald Ansett* – Founder of Ansett Airways Pty Ltd.
- VH-OQI *David Warren* – Inventor of the Black Box Flight Recorder.
- VH-OQJ *Bert Hinkler* – Pilot of first solo flight from Britain to Australia in 1928.
- VH-OQK *John and Reginald Duigan* – First Australians to design, construct and fly a powered aircraft, in 1910.
- VH-OQL *Phyllis Arnott* – First Australian woman to gain a commercial pilot's license.
- VH-OQM *Keith McPherson Smith and Ross*

McPherson Smith – winners of the famous 'Air Race' between London and Australia in 1919.

- VH-OQN *Lester Brain* – Piloted one of the first Qantas routes in 1925 and ferried the first wartime Catalina Flying Boat delivered by Qantas Empire Airways in 1941. Later appointed General Manager of Trans-Australia Airlines in 1946.
- VH-OQO *Lores Bonney* – First woman to fly solo around Australia in 1932 and the first woman to fly solo from Australia to England, in 1933.
- VH-OQP *Norman Brearley* – Founder of Western Australian Airways Limited, which operated Australia's first scheduled air service on 5 December 1921.
- VH-OQQ *P G Taylor* – Navigator and co-pilot alongside Charles Kingsford Smith and Charles Ulm on many record-breaking flights between Australia and the United States and England and Australia. Taylor was awarded the Empire Gallantry Medal in 1937 for one of the most revered acts of bravery in the history of aviation.
- VH-OQR *Scotty Allan* – Co-pilot alongside Charles Ulm and P G Taylor on the 1933 record-breaking flight from England to Australia and later joined Qantas and flew DH86 aircraft on the Brisbane-Singapore route.
- VH-OQS *John Flynn* – Founder of the Royal Flying Doctor Service.
- VH-OQT *Gaby Kennard* – First Australian woman to fly solo around the world in 1989.

Lights out at Tempelhof

The last flight lifted off from Berlin's Tempelhof Airport on 31st October 2008 bringing an end to an era of aviation that spanned World War II, the Cold War and the rebirth of the German capital.

Shortly before midnight, a C-47 "Candy Bomber" and a Junkers Ju-52 took off from the historic airport. Then the runway lights were turned off and Tempelhof was officially closed. The future of the 365ha site is uncertain, however proposals have included turning the airfield and buildings into a luxury spa, condominiums, a museum, a park a trade centre or even the centrepiece of a new Olympic bid.

In 1909, Frenchman Armand Zipfel made the first flight demonstration in Tempelhof, followed by Orville Wright later that same year. Tempelhof was first officially designated as an airport on 8 October 1923 and Lufthansa was founded in Tempelhof on 6 January 1926.

The old terminal, originally constructed in 1927, received politicians and celebrities from around the world during the 1930s. As part of Albert Speer's plan for the reconstruction of Berlin during the Nazi era, Prof. Ernst Sagebiel was ordered to replace the old terminal with a new terminal building in 1934.

The airport halls and the neighbouring buildings, intended to become the gateway to Europe were a symbol of Hitler's "world capital" *Germania*. The "air stadium" had massive stone blocks and pillars, boasting 49 buildings, seven hangars and 9000 offices. With its façades of shell limestone, the terminal building, built between 1936 and 1941, formed a massive 1.2km long quadrant yet had an intimate feel; aircraft could taxi right up to the building and unload, sheltered from the weather by its enormous overhanging canopy.

Tempelhof had an advantage of central location just minutes from the heart of Berlin and quickly became one of the world's busiest airports. It saw its greatest pre-war days during 1938–1939 when more than 52 foreign and 40 domestic aircraft arrived and departed daily from the old terminal, while the new one was still under construction.

The terminal was designed as headquarters for Deutsche Lufthansa, with unique features including giant arc-shaped hangars for aircraft parking. The building was meant to resemble an eagle in flight with semicircular hangars forming the bird's spread wings. Although under construction for more than ten years, it was never finished because of WWII.

After the war, Tempelhof became a major U.S. Air Force base. It became the central point of the U.S.-led Berlin Airlift when on 20 June 1948 Soviet authorities, claiming technical difficulties, halted all traffic by land and by water into or out of the western-controlled section of Berlin. The only remaining access routes into the city were three 25-mile-wide air corridors across the Soviet-occupied zone of Germany. Faced with the choice of abandoning the city or attempting to supply its inhabitants with the necessities of life by air, the Western Powers chose the latter course, and for the next eleven months sustained the city's two-and-a-half million residents in one of the greatest feats in aviation history.

Operation Vittles, as the airlift was unofficially named, began on 26 June when USAF Douglas C-47 "Skytrains" carried 80 tons of food into Tempelhof, far less than the estimated 4,500 tons of food, coal and other essential supplies needed daily to maintain a minimum level of existence. But this force was soon augmented by U.S. Navy and RAF cargo aircraft, as well as British European Airways (BEA) and some of Britain's fledgling wholly privately owned, independent airlines. The latter included the late Sir Freddie Laker's Air Charter, Eagle Aviation and Skyways. On 15 October 1948, to promote increased safety and cooperation between the separate US and British airlift efforts, the Allies created a unified command – the Combined Airlift Task Force under Maj. Gen. William H. Tunner, USAF, was established at Tempelhof.

In addition to the airlift operations, American engineers constructed a new 6,000-ft runway at Tempelhof between July and September 1948 and another between September and October 1948 to accommodate the expanding requirements of the airlift. The last airlift transport touched down at Tempelhof on 30 September 1949.

For the Diary

As mentioned in our Calendar of Events below, the Wings over Illawarra Fly-in will be held on Sunday 22nd February 2009 at Albion Park and hosted by the Shellharbour Council, Sport Aircraft Association Chapter 4 and the Historical Aircraft Restoration Society. Most of HARS aircraft will be in attendance as well as some visitors from the Temora Aviation Museum.

AHSA (NSW) is intending to have a stand, where there will be book sales, as well as provide general information about the Society.

Calendar of Events

6 December 2008 Lunch with the Tiger Moths. Luskintyre NSW

2-5 January 2009 The Great Eastern Fly-in. Evans Head NSW

31 January-1 February 2009 Temora Aviation Museum Flying Days. Temora NSW

22 February 2009 Wings Over Illawarra. Albion Park NSW

7-8 March 2009 Temora Aviation Museum Flying Days. Temora NSW

10-15 March 2009 Australian International Air Show. Avalon Vic

Warbirds Directory

Geoff Goodall has just released the latest issue of his CD, Warbirds Directory 2008. The Directory, which costs \$54.99 including post & packaging, is only available on CD and can be purchased on line at www.warbirdsdirectory.goodall.com.au.

Contributions and Contacts

News items, other contributions, or requests for information etc for inclusion in the newsletter can be sent to AHSA (NSW) at P.O. Box K346, Haymarket NSW 1238 or to Warwick Bigsworth, E-mail (madsen2010@optusnet.com.au) or (02) 8824 7814.

Thanks

Thanks to John Scott and Keith White for their contributions to this newsletter.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A PROSPEROUS & PEACEFUL NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS.

LOOPS AND LANDINGS

Inspired by John Kingsford-Smith

In Search of Bolivar - Final.

Bill Wittber deserved to have been the first Australian to design, build and fly a powered aeroplane in the state of South Australia. Instead that honour went to Allan Betteridge who designed and built an underpowered, 20 ft wingspan monoplane, which he flew at Port Augusta, in October 1912, over a distance of 60 yds at a height of one foot. At that time Wittber, working in his own meticulous way, was building a Farman type biplane, which he had begun in early 1911 but was not to finish until the end of 1913. There was not much left of the Bleriot after the fire at Gillies Arcade, but Wittber purchased the remains from Fred Jones to acquire the badly damaged Anzani engine. He repaired the Anzani and used it for taxiing, while he finished building a 50 hp six cylinder radial engine to replace it. This was not completed until mid 1915 when it was finally fitted to his biplane. By then, Harry Butler had joined Wittber, and together in a process of self instruction they were each achieving progressively longer and higher straight line flights. At this point the Commonwealth Government stepped in and stopped Wittber from carrying out any further trials.

The Intelligence Section of the General Staff, Department of Defence, was monitoring civil aviation activities at the time. Under the War Precautions Act 1914, 'enemy aliens', predominantly people of German or Austro-Hungarian nationality, caught in Australia at the outbreak of war, were interned. By the end of 1915, public paranoia had caused the widening of the Act to cast suspicion upon the loyalty of native-born Australians of 'enemy descent'. Perhaps this is why the Intelligence Section allowed people like Graham Carey and Basil Watson to register and fly their privately owned aeroplanes during the war years. But when it came to an individual with the given names of Carl Wilhelm, and a surname like Wittber, with its proud Prussian-Lutheran heritage, it was another story. Bill Wittber was understandably bitter about the actions of the authorities. He declared that he had lost all interest in aviation. In a final act of despair, he burnt the timber frame and fabric of his biplane in the bath heater at his father's home in the Adelaide suburb of Dulwich.

In his letter to Bill Wittber in July 1957, Fred Jones admitted that his report to journalists on March 17, 1910, claiming that Fred Custance had successfully flown his Bleriot, was a myth. However, for that myth to be sustained as truth, it was necessary for Fred Custance to be complicit. In his first attempt to fly the Bleriot, Custance had caused substantial damage to it, had been injured himself, and was in a state of shock immediately afterwards. The accident was a financial setback for Jones, and had the potential for him to lose credibility as a successful aviation entrepreneur. Custance, having been the direct cause of the accident due to his inexperience, at least owed Jones his loyalty and went along with the conspiracy. As young as he was, Custance also had his own reputation to uphold as a joint holder of several automobile city to city records. This was on his mind when interviewed by journalists on March 17, 1910. He said: "It is rather a coincidence that 12 months to the day Mr G. G. White and I finished the Melbourne to Adelaide motor record which, in spite of three attempts to reduce it, still stands."

Following his association with Jones, Fred Custance returned to employment with Vivian Lewis Ltd. He also continued his pursuit of road speed records. On November 22, 1912, over a triangular course between Maitland, Ardrossan and Arthurton, on the Yorke Peninsular, he set Australasian and South Australian 12 and 24 hour records by covering 532 miles in 24 hours continuous riding on his 31/2 hp Lewis motorcycle. But did Fred Custance ever return to flying? According to the late Nelson Eustis he did, and there is a photograph of Custance, seated in the pilot's cockpit of a BE2c in the Middle East, wearing the helmet and goggles of an Australian Flying Corps pilot, to prove that he did. In the photograph his sergeant's stripes are clearly visible.

In his book, 'Australia's First Flights, March 1910', published in 2002, Eustis wrote: "Custance volunteered for service in World War I in June 1915. He was in camp for eight months before embarking for overseas where he served with a motor ambulance brigade. To his delight, after six

months and possibly because of his love of aviation, he was selected to join the Australian Flying Squadron and trained in Victoria at Point Cook. Sailing overseas in 1916, Custance had many exciting experiences in Palestine where he was quickly promoted to the rank of sergeant. While serving in the Middle East he is reported to have made a record-breaking flight from Cairo to the Suez via Romani in 40 hours.... many famous Australian airmen successfully flew the BE2c, including Sir Ross Smith, Sir Hudson Fysh and Sir Richard Williams. Fred was in good company....Custance was invalided home just before the Armistice in November 1918, whether because of sickness or war injuries is not known." The most improbable part of the foregoing account is the claim of a 40 hour record flight over a triangular course, Cairo - Romani - Suez, a distance of 175 miles. The absurdity of this claim is obvious. But there is a strange echo of the triangular Maitland - Ardrossan - Arthurton record course in the claim that hints of a myth created by Custance himself.

Fred Custance enlisted as a private in the AIF on June 21, 1915. He was posted to the A.A.M.C., serving in the motor transport section. When No 1 Sqn AFC formed at Laverton on January 8, 1916, its personnel were raised in Australia from pilots and observers who had completed training in Australia, and from suitable volunteers already in AIF camps. Custance was one of those volunteers, having been given Regimental No 216. The squadron, consisting of 28 officers, and 195 other ranks, embarked from Port Melbourne for Egypt on board HMAT *Orsova* on March 16. Custance was promoted to corporal before embarkation with one further promotion to sergeant on August 24, 1916, after his arrival in Egypt. Of the 93 pilots and 75 observers who eventually served with No 1 Sqn AFC, there was no pilot below the rank of lieutenant and no observer below the rank of 2nd lieutenant. The name Custance does not appear in the lists of pilots or observers. Nor is there evidence, in the military record of Fred Custance, of any period of pilot training in Australia, Egypt or England. Fred may well have had the good company of Ross Smith, Hudson Fysh and Richard Williams - but not as a fellow pilot.

On August 10, 1917, Fred Custance reported sick and was admitted to hospital at Kantara. He was diagnosed with debility, an anxiety disorder resulting in general weakness and loss of bodily strength. He was released back to his unit on September 21. He again reported sick on March 15, 1918, and was admitted to hospital at Kantara, but this time in a state of hysteria. He was transferred to the base hospital in Port Said after being diagnosed with neurasthenia, a medical term now obsolete but then, in a military context, more commonly known as shell-shock. He was confined to hospital for over five months before being invalided home, embarking on board HMAT *Wiltshire*, departing Suez on August 30, 1918. It is small wonder that he arrived home from Egypt with a few myths, and a posed photograph, to help fill the gaps between his "many exciting experiences in Palestine". Back in 1910, a Gawler newspaper, *The Bunyip*, owned by William Barnet, the future father-in-law of Fred Custance, reported Custance's experience during his Bolivar flight: "I am told that while ascending at a great rate he was suddenly seized with intense anxiety.." Could this and the subsequent crash have caused Custance to suffer post traumatic stress disorder, and explain the later disastrous consequences?

On his return to South Australia, Fred Custance once again joined Vivian Lewis Ltd, but now as manager of its Burra Branch. He and Edith started a family with the birth of a son, Harold Maxwell, on September 17, 1921. Custance then took over management of Vrai Limited in Adelaide, the agent for Holt caterpillar tractors. One of these tractors had been transported to *Telechie Station*. Fred Custance took the train to Olary, near the NSW border, and was driven by car to *Telechie Station* to give a demonstration on the tractor. On Sunday June 3, 1923, accompanied by Trevor Hawker, he was returning to Olary by car to catch the Broken Hill Express back to Adelaide. The car became bogged at a creek crossing, about 6 or 7 miles from Olary. Having left Hawker with the car, Custance set out on foot for Olary to get help. When he had not returned by Monday morning, Hawker also walked towards Olary and found Custance dead on the road only 11/2 miles from the town. *The Advertiser* reported: "It is presumed that Mr Custance was taken ill. The night was bitterly cold, and his evident struggles pointed to a very sad death. He was a man in the prime of life and is understood to have enjoyed good health." Is it possible that his personal demons, anxiety and panic, perhaps born at Bolivar on March 17, 1910, played their part in the lonely death of Fred Custance?.....**John Scott.**