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 2012 No.463

file 2012 - 2

July Meeting

The July meeting will be held at the Powerhouse Museum on Wednesday 4th July 2012, at 7.45pm. The venue will be the Amenities Room, at the southern end of the Administration building. Entry is via Macarthur Street and car parking in the normal area, or immediately in front of the meeting room. Visitors are most welcome and supper will be available after the meeting.

This meeting will feature Guest Speaker Captain Bruce Simpson, whose topic will be

Warbirds

The Warbirds industry in Australia has experienced a significant growth since legislation was introduced to permit civil flight by such aircraft. Warbirds feature at all major air shows in Australia and form the basis of the Temora Aviation Museum, and to a significant extent at HARS. However the journey has not been easy, due to issues including the restoration, certification, training and flying of warbirds. Far from the early types such as the Mustang and Wirraway, warbirds in Australia now include heavy multi-engine aircraft such as the Caribou, Neptune and Catalina, jet fighters such as various models of the MiG, Vampire, Meteor and Sabre, the A-37 Dragonfly ground attack aircraft, Canberra bomber as well as myriad T-28s, Harvards, and of course, Wirraways and Mustangs. Bruce will discuss many of these aspects of warbird restoration, training and operations during his talk.

Bruce Simpson is currently a Qantas Check and Training Captain on the Airbus A380. He began his aviation career as a cadet aeronautical engineer at Hawker de Havilland and gained experience in all facets of engine and aircraft systems, design, manufacture, maintenance, overhaul and repair. He also gained his Private Pilots Licence and later proceeded on a career of flying as a commercial pilot and flying instructor. He flew with Oxley Airlines along the east coast, as well as to Lord Howe Island and Norfolk Island before joining Qantas in 1983. He has flown B767 and B747, the latter of which he was Senior Check Captain and Technical Manager.

In 2002, he was tasked with the introduction of a new aircraft for Qantas as Project Manager, and subsequently the A330 and A380 were selected. Bruce was responsible for the overall provision of all requirements for A330 flight operations and integration with the rest of the company. On introduction of the aircraft, he was tasked with the fleet management and Senior Check Captain duties. He converted to the A380 in 2008 and became Senior Check Captain on that aircraft.

But Qantas has been only part of Bruce's aviation career; he has also been Operations Manager for the Illawarra Flying School and Manager of Classic Aviation Services Pty Ltd, which specialises in aircraft maintenance, warbird re-building and warbird instruction. He was a founding member of Australian Warbirds Association Ltd and has held executive positions of Secretary and President; and, was a founding member of HARS.

Bruce has participated in a number of ferry flights: Lockheed Lodestar – trans-Pacific; DC-3 – trans-Pacific; DC-2 – trans-Atlantic for Dutch National Museum; F.27 – Australia – The Netherlands; and Catalina – France to Australia.

With such an impressive background and experience in aviation I'm sure this will be a most entertaining presentation. Please join us for another evening of interesting aviation history.

Committee Meeting

A Committee Meeting commencing at 6.15pm will be held immediately prior to the July meeting.

June Meeting

The June meeting was a celebration of "A Century of Australian Air Races and Air Shows".

Peter Finlay gave a presentation of the first official air race in Australia – between W.E. Hart and "Wizard" Stone from Mascot to Rose Hill Racecourse on 29th June 1912. The talk gave a graphic representation of Keith White's episode on the W.E. Hart Centenary Celebration, which appeared in the June issue of *Southern Skies*. Peter also displayed his excellent 1/12th scale Bristol "Boxkite" No. 10 built from a short kit of a Farman IV.

John Scott addressed the issue of First Official Air Race in Australia. As described in Keith White's articles, there is no doubt that the air race between Hart and Stone was indeed Australia's first. From Keith's article in June: *"In the lead up to race day, an official programme containing 32 pages was printed. It measured 208 cm by 140 cm. Its front page reads:*

'Under patronage of His Excellency The Governor-General and the Minister of Defence for Australia ... First International Aviation Contest ... (controlled under personal direction of Philip Lytton) ... W.B. Hart (Australia) v. "Wizard" Stone (America) ...Sydney to Parramatta & Return ... Saturday, June 15 1912 ... Price, 6d.". Around the border of the page, a sponsor's name in large letters was printed repeatedly!'"

It was endorsed by the Aerial League of Australia and Department of Defence, yet MuseumVictoria still claims that "On 27 August 1920, (an event known as) the Aerial Derby started at Serpentine, (Shire of Loddon) recognised as Australia's first official air race."

Following Peter's and John's presentations, John introduced a film commemorating 100 years of the Paris Air Show, from1909 - 2009. The video showed a vast variety of aircraft from those early pioneering days until 2009.

The first exhibition devoted entirely to aircraft was held at the Grand-Palais in 1909. It was held annually until 1924, except for those years during World War I. From 1924, it has been held every two years, except for World War II. Aircraft featured in the early exhibitions included those manufactured by Farman, Bleriot, Potez, Moraine-Saulnier and Caudron. The 9th Paris Air Show, held in 1924, was the first to permit foreign visitors, mainly from British and German manufacturers.

In 1946, the first flying display for the exhibition was held at Orly Airport. With two Paris airports now in use, the Air Show held its last exhibition at the Grand-Palais in 1951 and the first show at Le Bourget was held in 1953. The 1953 show featured aircraft including the Sud-Ouest Vatour bomber; SNCASO SO-9000 Trident, which was powered by two turbo-jet engines and a liquid fuel rocket engine; Fouga Magister and an English Electric Canberra.

The 1955 Show featured the Nord Noratlas transport aircraft; Sud Aviation Caravelle; Sud Aviation Alouette II helicopter; and Folland Gnat – to name but few. 1957 brought more first generation jet airliners including the Caravelle and Tupolev Tu-104, as well as the latest in British military aviation – the Hawker Hunter,

The 1961 show also featured American aircraft – the most significant of which was the Convair B-58 Hustler, which was the first supersonic jet bomber capable of Mach 2 flight. This aircraft crashed during the show, and the video showed graphic details of the accident. Also on display were the Dornier Do.28; Nord 262; Breguet 940, four engine STOL aircraft, English Electric P.1 and the Douglas C-133 Cargomaster.

The clip from the 1973 Show depicted the Tupolev TU-144 Supersonic Transport which crashed shortly after take-off, killing the 6 crew on board and 8 persons on the ground. Its flight was just after the earlier demonstration flight by the Concorde.

Later years brought an even more diverse selection of foreign built aircraft as well as space-craft. The video was an excellent recollection of the Paris Air Shows and thanks to John Scott for providing it.

Vale

Allen Clarke

Members will be saddened to learn of the passing of former long-term member Allen (Al) Clarke, who passed away peacefully on Monday 7th May 2012 at Manly Vale Nursing Home. He was relocated from Killarney Vale following a series of hospitalisations as a result of carcinoid cancer and its complications.

Allen maintained a keen interest in aviation up to the end taking to the hospital and nursing home his binoculars and airband radio.

Al had served in the RAF, initially as aircrew and later as an Air Traffic Controller. He joined AHSA (NSW) in 1992, was a regular attendee at meetings and served as a Committee member until he moved to the Central Coast, when travelling times became a challenge. Al was one always ready to contribute – he had a wide knowledge of not only British, Irish and European aviation, but also his adopted country here.

Due to his wife's illness and Al being full-time carer, he resigned from the Society in 2010; however he kept in touch and remained on our electronic mailing list for Society news.

Don Charlwood AM

Navigator, Air-traffic Controller, Author.

A former Senior Supervisor of Air Traffic Control in Australia, Don Charlwood AM, passed away on 18 June 2012, aged 96. He was born in Melbourne in 1915 and spent his boyhood in the seaside town of Frankston.

Having lost his job during the Great Depression, Charlwood hitchhiked to a cousin's sheep property at Nareen in the Western District of Victoria. He travelled via Cape Otway, seeking the place where his grandmother and great-grandmother were shipwrecked in 1855 on the sailing ship *Schomberg*.

From Nareen Don Charlwood joined RAAF aircrew in 1940 and served in WWII as a navigator with Bomber Command in Britain, during a period of very heavy losses. In the seven months of 1942-43 that Charlwood's crew was on 103 Squadron, it was the only crew to complete the thirty operational sorties over Europe required for a first tour.

After the War, Charlwood worked for the Department of Civil Aviation for thirty years in air traffic control, first at Melbourne Airport then as a selector of candidates for air traffic control training. The 'Don Charlwood Award' for the top trainee of each year was named in his honour. During his working life Charlwood wrote the first three of his books, and early in his retirement Charlwood began researching and writing about the sailing ship era, immigration by sail and shipwrecks.

His autobiographical books were *No Moon Tonight* (1966); *Marching as to War* (1990); *Journeys into Night* (1991). His novels were *All the Green Year* (1965) and *An Afternoon of Time* (1966); whilst non-fiction books were *Take-off to Touchdown: The Story of Air Traffic Control* (1968), *Wrecks & reputations: the loss of the Schomberg and Loch Ard*, (1977), *The Long Farewell* (1981) and *The Wreck of the Loch Ard*.

Don Charlwood was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) in 1992 for services to Australian Literature.

Hushpower

June 29 marks the 50th anniversary of the first flight of the Vickers VC10 prototype. It was hailed as Britain's answer to the Boeing 707 and the Douglas DC-8, although the constant changes to specification and the number required by BOAC determined its dismal future. It was designed to serve BOAC's Medium Range Empire routes and the Trans-Atlantic route. The VC10's rear-mounted

engines and clean wing were designed to fulfil the high cruise speed and demanding airfield performance sought by BOAC. The full-span leading edge slats and Fowler flaps gave the VC10 an approach speed some 20kts lower than its US counterparts.

The Super VC10 was a stretched version, 13 feet longer than the standard model, and was the type last used by British Airways on its Australian services.

The marketing of the VC10 featured the slogan – "Hushpower" – which may well have been correct for those travelling aboard; however, residents around Sydney, Melbourne and Perth would have well been aware of the extremely noisy Rolls Royce Conways powering the aircraft whenever it was arriving or departing from those airports.

The Royal Air Force is the last operator of the VC10 in a tanker and transport role and it will be withdrawn from service in March 2013, when it is replaced by the Airbus A330 Multi-Role Tanker Transport. For those who still enjoy the noise of the Conways, wouldn't it be great if one could visit the Australian International Air Show at Avalon in March 2013?

On the Internet

Sopwith Snipe
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHnW6lqmBfY

This is a clip of The Vintage Aviator Limited's new Sopwith Snipe, with original Bentley BR2 rotary, on its first display appearance in New Zealand. The Vintage Aviator's website also features many projects and images of its aircraft: www.thevintageaviator.co.nz.

Award

Congratulations to Vice-Chairman of the Queensland Air Museum, Ron Cuskelly, who was awarded the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for services to aviation in the recent Queen's Birthday Honours list. Ron served with Qantas for some 32 years, although his involvement in aviation is far more substantial than that. In 1971 he joined the Queensland Branch of AHSA, and acted as Secretary of that Branch. The quest by that group to acquire an ex-RAAF Canberra led to the group now known as the Queensland Air Museum.

Ron's historical research has led to the development of a number of websites, for which he acts as webmaster. These comprise: The Lockheed File, Squawk Ident, General MacArthur's DC-3, Australian DC-3 Census, Adastra Aerial Surveys, VH-Jet#1 and her Sisters, and Queensland Air Museum.

The William Ewart Hart Centenary Celebration

By Keith White

July 1912

ANOTHER NEW AEROPLANE

The Sydney Morning Herald dated I July, 1912, published a very comprehensive report of the air race, describing the less than satisfactory weather on the day "an occasional spurt of rain - and the fact that this time the airmen were distinctly on their mettle; they appeared to consider that they owed a debt to the public, and were determined to pay it off at all risks."

It also mentioned that Hart had been photographed in addition to landing "within a few feet of a cinematograph machine which was taking pictures." *The Sydney Morning Herald* does not hold any of these photos.

Stone had been interviewed the previous night and said he was at a great disadvantage through not knowing the course better!! Hart was quoted, "It was unfortunate that Stone lost his way. A better arrangement, I think, for a future contest would be over a circular course against time, the best to win." Incidentally, the report twice described Hart's biplane as a "monoplane"!

The *Herald's* editorial was very long and covered the state of aviation in Europe and America and how it related to Australia. For example, its opening statement reads:

"AVIATION IN AUSTRALIA.

The air race of Saturday was the first affair of the kind to take place in Australia. We have had some experience of flying, but it has been infrequent and at long intervals. Saturday's event, happily brought to issue undisturbed by aerial antagonism, is much more likely to focus public attention upon the science. It makes appeal, for one thing, to the sporting interest, and that is always a large interest. Further, the idea of a race with two pre-determined points of beginning and ending concerned, and contestants, and the racing necessity of speed are all unfamiliar elements in Australian aviation, and are all elements calculated to give the community concrete grip of the matter."

The editorial ends: "All this is progress of the phenomenal order, and Australia is as yet outside its radius. But with aviators inclined to come this way from abroad, and with a skilful exploiter of the air who, in the person of Mr. Hart, is himself an Australian, we make take heart and foretell the day as not far distant when Australian aviators will be in line with the world's development of air control. The possibilities latent in the science are incalculable. It is enough to say that its reduction to the minimum of risk upon which thousands of investigators are at this moment setting their hopes will revolutionise human life."

In the body of the editorial, mention is made of "The tragic death roll of aviation is a melancholy witness to .the unseen forces which aviation has not overcome!" Statistics published in the magazine, *"The Motor in Australia"*, on 2 September, 1912 show in the first year of the aeroplane's appearance there was one death. In 1909, there were 3; in 1910, 29; in 1911, 83; a total of 115. Almost half of these deaths were traceable to the aviator himself. During 1912, the magazine estimated 200 fatalities, hopefully less!

When Hart was awarded the air race by the referee, George Taylor, he achieved another first in Australian aviation to be added to all the other firsts during his relatively short flying career.

Stone was scheduled to sail from Sydney to Brisbane on Monday, 1 July, and there does not seem to be any report of the two pilots meeting before the American left Sydney, so it would seem the conclusion to our first international air race was something of a non-event.

I think you will agree that, after the air race, moving his support activities from Ascot Racecourse, Surrey Park

and Parramatta Park back to Ham Common would have been quite a time-consuming exercise for his team.

Newspaper reports differ in reporting when Hart flew his Boxkite from Parramatta Park to Ham Common, but the *Cumberland Argus* dated 2 July reports it as 30 June. It is reported that, on approach, he skimmed the surface of a nearby lagoon but landed safely in a paddock some distance from his base. *The Nepean Times* reported on 6 July that some panels of paddock fencing were removed to enable him to take off, but he struck another fence and damaged his aeroplane, probably for the last time, and sprained his wrist. Referring to the same incident, Stanley Brogden wrote, with hindsight, in his article entitled *"The Flying Dentist"*: "Then the flying dentist's luck began to run out."

With activities starting to return to normal, completing the construction of his new monoplane would have been high on Hart's list of jobs to be done, as his Boxkite was nearing the end of its flying days.

As I mentioned in last month's story, *The Evening News* reported that Hart's biplane "... presented a weather-worn appearance, the tail being patched in several places, while seven ribs, which had been damaged, were temporarily repaired with wire." But, at Surrey Park for the race start Hart had said loyally his "machine is all right, although it is a bit patched." On 9 February, 1938, *The Sydney Morning Herald* quoted him as saying "towards the end of its career a crash was almost a weekly occurrence."

Although Hart's reputation had been greatly enhanced by being awarded the air race, it seems the interest in Hart's activities soon fell away following its finish. Whatever, Hart and Sanford continued with their construction of another new monoplane (see May article re building an earlier aeroplane). It was to be powered by the 50 h.p. Gnome rotary engine which had served Hart so well since he commenced his flying career some 10 months ago. The old Boxkite airframe was no doubt put aside for use as required. (To be continued)

Anniversaries

Amelia Earhart

July 2 marks the 75th anniversary of the disappearance of Amelia Earhart and Fred Noonan in their Lockheed L.10 Electra on 2 July 1937 whilst en-route from Lae, New Guinea to Howland Island in the Pacific Ocean.

A research team will set off for the remote island of Nikumaroro to try and establish what happened to the legendary pilot after she vanished on July 2 1937. It is the tenth time in 23 years The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery (TIGHAR) will have searched the island for clues about Earhart's disappearance - but this time they will be looking specifically for crash debris.

AHSA Meetings

Melbourne

Meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of the month at RAAF Association, 24 Camberwell Rd, Hawthorn East, in the auditorium. Parking is available under the building – enter from the lane at the south end. The meetings start at 7.30pm - ring the bell if the front door is shut. A number of members meet casually for dinner from 6.00pm at the Tower Hotel opposite the RAAFA. Visitors welcome – contact Antony Grage on 0418 170 395.

Wednesday 27 June: Russell Darbyshire, who with his father Dave owns Aviaquip and Aerospace Spares at Moorabbin Airport, will talk about the Darbyshire family's involvement in aviation. For example, Dave was involved in gliding, in the SAAA (having built his own aircraft), and Air Tasmania. Dave's uncle, Jim was President of the Cropdusters' Association, and flew with KLM. Several other Darbyshires are also pilots.

Brisbane

Meetings are held at 7.00pm for 7.30pm on the last Friday of each month at the Royal Queensland Aero Club, Archerfield. Visitors are welcome; contact Don Furlonger (07) 3371 5867.

Friday 29 June 2012 Wing Commander Mike MacKenzie RAAF (Rtd) and Captain George Palmer, ex Singapore and Ansett Airlines, will speak about two aircraft types with which they have had particular experience; Mike to speak about the HP Herald which he flew when on exchange with the Royal Malaysian Air Force and George on the F.27 Friendship, which he flew with Ansett.

Calendar of Events

30 June – 1 July 2012 Queensland Air Museum Open Cockpit Weekend. Caloundra Qld

7 July 2012 Aircraft Showcase – Fighters – Temora Aviation Museum. Temora NSW

21 July 2012 Aircraft Showcase – Trainers to Jets – Temora Aviation Museum. Temora NSW

4 August 2012 Aircraft Showcase – WWII Pacific Theatre - Temora Aviation Museum. Temora NSW

18 August 2012 Aircraft Showcase – Vietnam, Long Tan - Temora Aviation Museum. Temora NSW

25 August 2012 Gathering of Eagles Fly-in. Watts Bridge Aerodrome, Qld.

1 September 2012 Aircraft Showcase – RAAF Fighters – Temora Aviation Museum. Temora NSW

8 September 2012 Wings over Warwick – Annual Fly-in. Warwick Qld.

13-15 September 2012 AUSFLY – Sports Aircraft Association of Australia. Narromine NSW.

15 September 2012 Coffs Harbour Air Show. Coffs Harbour NSW

13-14 October 2012 Jamestown Air Show, Jamestown SA.

4 November 2012 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) Inc at P.O. Box K346, Haymarket NSW 1238 or to the Editor, Warwick Bigsworth via E-mail *(madsen2010@optusnet.com.au)* or on (02) 8824 7814.

Thanks

Thanks to Peter Coates, Ian Debenham, John Scott, Keith White and *Oana* – The Newsletter of the Queensland Air Museum, for their contributions to this newsletter.

LOOPS AND LANDINGS

Inspired by John Kingsford-Smith

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,... – Part 5.

In his book, *Sidney Cotton – The Last Plane Out of Berlin*, Jeffrey Watson describes the first meeting between Australian aviator, Sidney Cotton, and the Chief of Air Intelligence of the Secret Intelligence Service, Frederick Winterbotham, in Cotton's London office during September, 1938. Sidney Cotton's recruitment into, and operations within, the dangerous world of secret intelligence gathering in Europe, pre WWII, is also described in Keith Jeffery's book, *MI6,The History of the Secret Intelligence Service 1909-1949*: "Cotton and his team developed cutting edge photographic techniques for air reconnaissance which provided better results than ever before. By the end of 1938 clandestine photographs were being taken of Italian bases and airfields... Cotton proceeded around Europe, flying at very high altitudes over Germany and Italy, photographing a large number of airfields and other military intelligence targets."

Fred Winterbotham served as a pilot with the RFC during WWI. He was shot down and captured by the Germans on July 13, 1917, and spent the remainder of the war as a POW. He rejoined the RAF in 1929, and was assigned to the newly created Air Section of the Secret Intelligence Service. Following Hitler's appointment as Chancellor of the German Reich on January 30, 1933, Winterbotham became increasingly concerned by evidence of secret violations of the Treaty of Versailles by Germany which enabled the rebuilding of its air power. In his guise as a civilian, he became a regular visitor to Germany and played the role of a Nazi sympathiser. As his department expanded he recruited other agents to carry out surveillance work in Germany, and analysed their reports. During 1935, Germany abandoned any pretence about rebuilding its air force, and Winterbotham intensified his efforts to determine its status and potential. By June, 1938, one of his agents, (No 479) reported that ground based surveillance was becoming extremely difficult because of increased security. No 479, who was ostensibly an Englishman on holiday with a female companion touring Germany by car, found that his intelligence gathering of activity at military airfields was hampered by the introduction of boundary zones of cultivated land up to 200 yards wide. Hence the need to employ Sidney Cotton for clandestine aerial reconnaissance. There was an alternative – to employ as an agent a high profile aviator who would be accepted by the Germans as a guest, permitted to inspect their airfields and other aviation facilities first hand. From the German viewpoint the risks associated with allowing such access could be outweighed by subsequent favourable publicity.

During the 1930s there was no person more famous in the world than Charles Lindbergh. Following the kidnapping and murder of his first child, and the trial and conviction of Bruno Hauptmann, Lindbergh and his family relocated to England in early 1936 to avoid publicity and harassment by newspaper reporters. In May, 1936, Lindbergh received a letter from Major Truman Smith, the American military attaché in Berlin, asking him to accept an invitation from General Goering to inspect German civil and military air installations. Smith's objective was to have Lindbergh report his observations back to the United States Army Air Force as a form of intelligence gathering. Goering's objective was to so impress Lindbergh that his report would overstate Germany's air power, thus creating a deterrent to any potential move against Germany. Lindbergh accepted Goering's invitation and the visit seemed to be an outstanding success for both sides. However, the appearance of Lindbergh, and his wife Anne, with Goering in his private box at the Berlin Olympic Games, did raise a few eyebrows. Lindbergh's visit paved the way for other high profile aviators, such as Alex Henshaw Igor Sikorsky and Glenn Martin, to accept invitations from Goering. Lindbergh was also invited back to Germany in October 1937, and again in October 1938. Henshaw filed a report with MI6 in 1937.

During the last fortnight of September, !938, Nancy Bird was coping with a full schedule of engagements, oblivious to the increased activity in the secret world of spies and double agents as Europe prepared for war. She was offered help from Florence Barwood, the personal assistant to the Secretary of the Royal Aeronautical Society, to cope with managing publicity and typing of letters. At one of the society functions Nancy attended, she renewed her acquaintance with Lord Sempill, who

had been President of the Royal Aeronautical Society from 1927 t0 1930. Nancy first met him at Mascot in 1934 after his most remarkable solo flight from the UK and Europe in his Puss Moth, G-ABJU, in which he also returned to the UK. Lord Sempill headed for Australia again in his Monospar Croydon, G-AECB, taking off from Hanworth in July 1936. He left the flight at Karachi to return to the UK on urgent business. The sad fate of G-AECB might have been different if he had remained with the flight as planned. But now in 1938, MI5 had a file on Lord Sempill. There were suspicions associated with his assistance in developing the Japanese Naval Air Service during the 1920s, and his subsequent continuing role as a paid consultant to the Japanese. Suspicion was intensified during the crisis charged atmosphere of 1938, when he appeared to be pro-fascist.

It was remarkable that Nancy had not abandoned her plans to return to Europe, which included visiting Germany, because of the unpredictable future there. However, from her experience so far, she felt that the British were less interested in aviation than the Dutch, the French or even her fellow Australians. British airlines also were not as helpful as KLM had been in allowing her to study their operations. She believed that she could learn no more in the UK. Therefore, following an approach to KLM, she was delighted to receive a letter from the airline's Mr Kaufman offering to fly her back to Amsterdam. In the meantime she was invited up to Leicester by Sir Lindsay Everard, an aviation enthusiast who lived at nearby Ratcliffe Hall. Sir Lindsay had opened Ratcliffe Aerodrome on his own land in 1930. He was a keen supporter of women aviators, and employed Winifred Spooner as his personal pilot before her death in 1933. At the time of Nancy's visit he owned a DH 84 Dragon, and employed his niece as his personal pilot. On the weekend of September 24/25, Nancy was flown back to London in the Dragon, to attend a Women's Air Rally to which she had been invited by the organiser, Gabrielle Patterson. The star of the rally, demonstrating her Messerschmitt Bf108B *Taifun*, was the famous German aviatrix, Elly Beinhorn.

When Elly Beinhorn landed at Mascot on April 2, 1932, Nancy Bird was sixteen years old and still working for her father at Mount George on the Manning River. However, Elly did meet Lores Bonney at Archerfield Aerodrome, and had been informed of the achievements of Australian women aviators. Elly was also grateful for the assistance she had received, and left Australia with fond memories of the people she had met. There is no doubt that Nancy and Elly formed an instant friendship when they met at the Women's Air Rally in London; so much so that Elly offered to fly Nancy back to Heston Aerodrome, in her *Taifun*, at the end of the rally. During their time together Nancy outlined the reasons for her overseas trip, and her plans to return to Europe in the next few days. It is probable that, back in Germany, Elly contacted the relevant authorities in an effort to organise for Nancy the same privileged access to the German aviation industry that had already been given to other high profile aviation personalities such as Charles Lindbergh. It is remarkable that MI6 appears to have missed the opportunity to recruit Nancy. She boarded a KLM flight at Croydon on September 28, and flew to Amsterdam to await the outcome of the Munich Conference, and advice from Elly that permission had been granted for her to proceed to Berlin.

Although Nancy's lodgings in Amsterdam were less salubrious than her previous stay at The Hague, she found it comfortable enough. She recalled in *My God It's a Woman* that: "I took German lessons in my room at the Museum pension in Amsterdam and visited the many museums, keen to improve my education. To see the originals of world famous paintings and look into a canvas that you had heard about at school was an extraordinary sensation. I learnt who Rembrandt was while living next door to his museum where many of his fine paintings are displayed. I was flattered by the attentions of a young German baron , who was probably a forerunner of the Fifth Column." There is little doubt that the young German baron was an agent of German military intelligence with instructions to check on Nancy's bona fides before her final acceptance as a guest of The Third Reich. Nancy obviously survived the scrutiny because she continued: "Equipped with a few German words I arrived in Berlin in 1938 as the Germans marched into Czechoslovakia. My first night was spent at the prestigious Bristol Hotel, where a bunch of red roses from Elly Beinhorn awaited my arrival." In accordance with the agreement signed at the Munich Conference, the Sudetenland was transferred to Germany. It was the Sudetenland, not Czechoslovakia, that was occupied by German troops on October 1...**John Scott.**

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August 2012 No.464

August Meeting

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This meeting will feature a visual review of the Australian International Air Show held at Avalon in 2011, presented by Peter Coates.

Peter was one of a number of former air traffic controllers who worked as volunteers and controlled much of the air traffic participating at, or on display at the air show. He was well qualified to be one of the team, as he has had extensive experience in air traffic control at RAAF and RAN bases, as well as having been a civilian air traffic controller at Bankstown, Camden and Sydney.

Peter will also describe the roles of the air show controllers who operated from a separate tower from the resident air traffic controllers in the Airservices Australia control tower.

The images have been provided by Bob Livingstone, another former Airservices Australia air traffic controller, who also worked as a volunteer air show controller.

John Scott will also briefly discuss the centenary of the death of the first Australian, Charles Lindsay Campbell, in an aeroplane accident on August 3, 1912.

Please join us for another evening of interesting aviation history.

July Meeting

Guest Speaker was Captain Bruce Simpson, a Qantas A380 Check and Training captain, although as those who attended realised, this is only one facet of Bruce's extensive aviation involvement.

Rather than a title of *Warbirds*, Bruce's talk might have been better described as *"The Compleat Aeronaut"* (with apologies to Izaak Walton). Bruce provided a thorough background of his growing up in New Zealand and Samoa in an aviation environment, fostered by his pilot father, Ralph, who flew for organizations such as Airlines of New Zealand, later South Pacific Airlines of New Zealand, and Polynesian Airlines. Bruce told of the idyllic days he experienced during his childhood, watching aircraft, playing in aircraft or hitching a ride in the Polynesian Airlines' DC-3.

When the family migrated to Australia, it was impressed upon Bruce to get a sound education in the basics, and on leaving high school, he attained a cadetship in aeronautical engineering with Hawker de Havilland. He worked at Lidcombe and Bankstown in the various workshops by day and attended university by night. Bruce noted that the Hawker de Havilland factory at Lidcombe was the last vestige of the de Havilland tradition – engines and airframes – which provided him with a sound background and qualifications in the overhaul, maintenance and repair of aircraft.

He also commenced flying lessons, gaining a commercial licence and instructor rating. He became an instructor at Schofields Flying Club and later flew for Aviation Centre and Illawarra Flying School. To gain much desired multi-engine IFR hours, he acquired a flying school which specialised in such training

He flew a wide variety of aircraft during his time as an instructor and charter pilot and went on to fly with Oxley Airlines before his airline career took a step up when he was accepted at Qantas. His vast amount of instructional work placed him in an ideal position when Check and Training positions arose.

But it was the non-airline stories that provided some of the most interesting elements of the talk. Bruce spoke of his father's desire to acquire something different; a LET L200A Morava, which was in storage in a barn at St George, Queensland. Ralph, Bruce and his brothers dismantled and transported the aircraft to Sydney where it was re-built and flew again in 1981. Bruce was invited to join a syndicate which owned an ex-RNZAF Harvard, and this was his introduction to the warbird movement.

Bruce and his family formed Classic Aviation, which developed into a major facility for restoring and rebuilding ex-service aircraft. Bruce showed a number of images of the aircraft which the company restored – Harvard, A-37 Dragonfly, MiG and Nanchang to name but few, as well as many other aircraft that received maintenance at the Bankstown facility.

Ralph also acquired a Lockheed L-18 Lodestar, which was ferried by Bruce from Oakland to Australia via Honolulu, Christmas Island, Pago Pago, Nadi to Brisbane. During his endorsement in the USA, Bruce encountered a real engine fire, whilst another incident identified a problem with fuel flow, which if not recognised, would have resulted in the aircraft unable to use at least two internal tanks of fuel on the long flight from Oakland to Honolulu, and which would have caused the inevitable ditching. Bruce also described the circumstances surrounding the flight from Brisbane to New Zealand for the Warbirds over Wanaka Air Show, where an engine failed close to half-way between Norfolk Island and New Zealand, giving the enthusiasts on board an unwanted bit of excitement.

(From the Office of Air Force History):

85 Years Ago

2 August 1927 - Papuan Survey Flight formed.

In 1927 the RAAF was asked to assist efforts by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company to uncover deposits of oil in the Australian-administered territories of Papua and New Guinea, by undertaking aerial reconnaissance to identify and photograph areas of potential interest to field parties.

A Papuan Survey Flight was formed at No 1 Aircraft Depot, Laverton, on this day, comprising two Seagull III amphibians and six personnel.

Departing on 27 September, the Flight commenced work on 16 October as it passed along the west coast of Papua towards Daru.

By late November the Seagulls had reached Aitape on the north coast of New Guinea, but the early onset of the monsoon wet season forced a halt to the survey.

One aircraft left Madang on 2 December and reached Melbourne on Boxing Day. The other machine, delayed by engine problems, did not return until 19 January 1928.

75 Years Ago

12 August 1937 - Instructor fell out of aircraft midair.

While instructing a trainee pilot on this day, Flying Officer John Balmer fell out of a Wapiti aircraft in midflight and was forced to resort to his parachute to reach the ground safely.

The incident occurred at 3000 feet about three kilometres north-west of Point Cook, when Balmer leaned from the rear cockpit to check switches in the front cockpit where his pupil was seated, lost his balance, and toppled over the side.

Fortunately the air cadet under instruction had flown solo before and, although left unexpectedly alone in the aircraft, was able to land it himself.

While apparently an accident, the story quickly circulated within the RAAF that Balmer had actually jumped to provide an otherwise proficient student with the incentive to apply his skills properly.

This was a belief that gained some credence from the showmanship which Balmer exhibited as a noted cross-country motorist.

70 Years Ago

11 August 1942 – Flying Officer Leigh Vial relieved of coast-watching vigil.

After spending five dangerous months reporting weather conditions and Japanese aircraft, ship and troop movements from behind enemy lines at Salamaua, New Guinea, Flying Officer Leigh Vial was finally relieved on this day.

A patrol officer before the war, he had joined the coast-watching organisation as a Pilot Officer in the RAAF on 28 January 1942 and a month later established an observation post overlooking Salamaua with the help of two New Guineans.

The radio messages he transmitted, often as many as nine a day, earned him the nickname 'Golden Voice'.

Accepting even greater risk of discovery, he moved his post closer to Salamaua in June.

Failing health necessitated his relief, after which he took command of Allied propaganda activities out of Port Moresby until his death in an aircraft crash in January 1943.

Though not the only RAAF coast-watcher, Vial was undoubtedly the most famous.

50 Years Ago

15 August 1962 - Disaster struck RAAF aerobatic team.

The newly-established 'Red Sales' aerobatic team from the Central Flying School, East Sale, crashed on this day while rehearsing for a performance at the base's Air Force Week display the following month.

Four Vampire T.35 jet trainers, two carrying passengers, took off from East Sale at 1.44 pm. Disaster struck about 20 minutes later, during recovery from a formation barrel roll at low level.

All four aircraft ploughed into a timbered rise some 12 kilometres south-west of the base and exploded on impact, killing instantly the six men on board.

Debris was scattered over a wide area, and the wreckage cut telephone and power lines in the area.

The formation of a new team was officially announced on 27 February 1963, with the 'Telstars' making their debut public performance in four Vampires the next day.

40 Years Ago

28 August 1972 - Heavy loss of life in PNG accident.

The crash of a DHC-4 Caribou in Papua New Guinea on this day was probably the most tragic accident in RAAF history.

Aircraft A4-233, one of a pair of Caribous detached semi-permanently from No 38 Squadron, was returning PNG school cadets from their annual training camp when it went missing on a flight from Lae to Port Moresby.

Despite a large-scale air search, it was not until three days later that four schoolboy survivors were located, having attempted to walk out for assistance.

They were able to direct rescuers to the crash site at Kudjeru Gap, near Wau, and a fifth schoolboy was winched out of the thick jungle, only to die later.

The Caribou's crew of three, plus a ground liaison officer from the Army, and 21 school cadets had all been killed in the disaster.

Contributions and Contacts

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

Thanks

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

LOOPS AND LANDINGS

Inspired by John Kingsford-Smith

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,... – Part 6.

In October, 1938, Nancy Bird flew from Holland to Templehof Airport aboard a KLM airliner. Any apprehension she may have felt about her reception in Germany was dispelled by the welcome she was given at the airport. Representatives of KLM and Lufthansa were on hand to meet her, as well as a gentleman bearing a large bunch of flowers from Elly Beinhorn, who was unable to be at the airport herself. Nancy was then driven to the luxurious Bristol Hotel in Berlin which was to be her base. On October 11, there was another celebrity arrival at Templehof, a Miles Mohawk, G-AEKW, with Charles Lindbergh as pilot, and his wife Anne as passenger. Although Nancy appears not to have crossed paths with the Lindberghs during her time in Germany, her itinerary included access to almost everything associated with civil aviation that Lindbergh visited. However, on the military side, Lindbergh was granted special access, including being allowed to fly a Bf 109 for half an hour at the Rechlin military airfield on October 21. Germany was hosting several other famous aviators during October, including Igor Sikorsky and Tommy Tomlinson from the USA, and Michel Detroyat from France. For Nancy there was an initial period for introductions and orientation before her itinerary was finalised. Much of this familiarisation was in the form of meetings at the German Aero Club, (Haus der Flieger), which was housed in an imposing building described by Nancy as being: "At one time home to the Prussian House of Parliament...On the end wall of the main lounge was a life-size oil painting of Adolf Hitler. Facing it from the other wall, was a similar painting of Hermann Goering... There were many other rooms including the ballroom, which could accommodate 1200 people." Nancy had come a long way from the rustic building at Mascot that housed the Royal Aero Club of New South Wales.

A couple of days after her arrival, Nancy was the official guest of the President of the German Aero Club, Herr Wolfgang von Gronau, at a luncheon which was also attended by representatives of Lufthansa, the Reichsluftfahrtministerium, (German Air Ministry), and Messerschmitt A. G. Following this luncheon she was made an honorary member of the club. Her next engagement, at which Elly Beinhorn was also present, was another luncheon with the directors of Lufthansa, including Nancy's special host, Herr Carl von Gablenz. It was then time for a meeting with Herr Fisch of the Air Ministry, at which the details for Nancy's visit were finalised. She wrote at the time: "A programme was arranged for me to visit, as a guest of Lufthansa, the major airports of Germany, including Vienna, Munich, Frankfurt, Cologne, Hamburg and Leipzig. I took ten days over the trip. The Air Ministry gave me special permission to take photographs at the various airports. I am still wondering what I've done to deserve all this." Nancy had both a movie and a still camera.

Nancy 's programme was supplemented to the extent that she was kept busy in Germany until the end of November. In fact the programme prepared for Charles Lindbergh, as far as civil aviation was concerned, was followed by Nancy a week or so later. For example Lindbergh visited the Junkers factory at Dessau on October 18, to inspect the Ju-90 airliner under construction. Nancy visited the same factory with the Shell representative, Herr Heinz Nitsche, as her guide. Lindbergh flew in the Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condor and the Junkers Ju-90 on October 17. Nancy also flew in the Condor on the Berlin/Frankfurt route, and in the Ju-90, *Schwabenland*, on its first scheduled passenger carrying flight with Lufthansa, on November 8, on the Berlin/Vienna route. Charles Lindbergh was apprehensive about flying in the Ju-90. The prototype had broken up in flight on February 7, 1938, during flutter tests. Lindbergh's flight on October 17, in the third Ju-90, *Bayern*, experienced severe vibration of the entire aircraft, which the pilot quickly stopped by reducing power. Before the end of November Nancy's *Schwabenland*, which was the fourth Ju-90, had been returned to Junkers for modifications to the wing. Meanwhile the second Ju-90, *Preussen*, crashed during tropical tests at Bathurst on November 21. Nancy probably never knew the danger she faced flying in the Ju-90. In Lindbergh's opinion the aircraft should never have been accepted into passenger carrying service.

As Lindbergh, and later Nancy, criss-crossed Germany by air, their aircraft was invariably the venerable Junkers Ju-52. On one occasion, after having been invited by the captain to take the

controls, Nancy wrote: "I enjoyed flying the Junkers Ju-52 as second pilot for over an hour on the radio compass above the clouds." On October 20, Charles Lindbergh departed Berlin in a Ju-52 on his way to inspect the Dornier factory at Friedrichshafen. While there he visited the Zeppelin works and the hangar housing the sister ship to the *Hindenburg*. This was the brand new *LZ 130*, named *Graf Zeppelin II*. Lindbergh wrote: "The great ship, shining new and clean, floated stilly at her cables. I felt depressed looking at her. She seemed so capable of life and movement, yet held quietly in that hangar by intangible forces. This airship represented the result of all the years of development of lighter-than-air. She seemed to me like a last member of a once proud and influential family." Nancy had the privilege of being the guest of the Mayor of Frankfurt when the *Graf Zeppelin II* made its transfer flight from Friedrichshafen to the Airship Port at Frankfurt am Main on October 31. She went on board *LZ 130* at Frankfurt and later wrote: "It is much larger than one can imagine. Its length overall is 776 feet. I went inside and inspected every bit of it. I took some movies too, with special permission from the Air Ministry." Following the loss of the *LZ 129 Hindenburg* at Lakehurst on May 6, 1937, Hugo Eckner travelled to Washington, DC, to lobby for the supply of helium for the *LZ 130*. After the annexation of Austria by Germany in March, 1938, the USA refused the supply of helium and the *LZ 130* was filled with hydrogen for its maiden flight on September 14. However, without helium the *LZ 130* could not be registered to carry passengers. Thus Nancy witnessed, and recorded, the end of an era. In April 1940, Hermann Goering ordered the scrapping of both Graf Zeppelins together with the unfinished airframe of *LZ 131*. On the third anniversary of the death of the *Hindenburg*, the two enormous airship hangars at Frankfurt am Main, in which Nancy had filmed the *LZ 130*, were levelled by explosives.

The Mayor of Frankfurt put his car at Nancy's disposal for three days, and she took the opportunity to make the short drive down to the Technical University of Darmstadt to visit the Akademische Fliergruppe. She wrote: "I drove down to Darmstadt to see the new gliding experimental station and manufacturing works, and while there I flew in a glider. Hanna Reitsch, the famous German woman pilot, gave an exhibition of stunting in a glider, doing slow rolls and inverted loops for me to see." Later in November, Nancy flew with Elly Beinhorn to an air rally at Magdeburg. Of the Bf108, in which she shared the piloting with Elly, she remarked that it was sensitive to the controls. Of the air rally she said that she witnessed aeroplanes and gliders doing things she never imagined were possible. Following Magdeburg Nancy planned an expedition to see Lufthansa's latest Atlantic air mail seaplane, *Nordmeer*, (Blohm & Voss Ha 139) and to inspect Dr Focke's helicopter, (Focke-Achgelis Fa 61).

Nancy was overwhelmed by, and grateful for the hospitality and assistance she was receiving in Germany, and to top it all off, she had fallen in love. She wrote of the time:" I did not believe in love at first sight until it happened to me." Charles Lindbergh was also very pleased with his reception. He found that Berlin had lost the air of tenseness he found in 1936, and now had the appearance of a healthy, busy, modern city. At a men's dinner at the American Embassy on October 18, he was presented with a civil decoration, *The Order of the German Eagle*, by Hermann Goering on behalf of Adolf Hitler. The decoration was ostensibly in recognition of Lindbergh's solo crossing of the Atlantic in 1927, but in reality it was another step in his seduction by The Third Reich. Later that evening, the Luftwaffe General, Erhard Milch, invited the Lindberghs to spend the winter in Berlin. Charles and Anne spent the last few days of their visit house hunting in Berlin before returning to Paris by the night train on October 29. For a short period, it was the best of times for Nancy and the Lindberghs. However, for over five years in Germany the persecution of Jews had been increasing and now in November, 1938, the plight of Jewish refugees was already of international concern. Then on November 7, a German born Polish Jew, Herschel Grynszpan, assassinated a German diplomat in Paris. There was a massive, state tolerated overreaction by Nazi thugs throughout Germany during the night of November 9/10, known as *Kristallnacht* because of the amount of broken glass in the streets from wrecked Jewish homes, businesses and synagogues. An editorial in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on November 12 commented: "Even those who desire most to be friends with the Reich must be shocked and saddened by the events of the past few days. The scenes which have been witnessed seem to belong, not to the present day, but to the Dark Ages of Europe."..... **John Scott.**

AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW) Inc

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Southern Skies

The Newsletter of AHSA (NSW) Inc

September 2012 No.465

September Meeting

The September meeting will be held at the Powerhouse Museum on Wednesday 5th September 2012, at 7.45pm. The venue will be the Amenities Room, at the southern end of the Administration building. Entry is via Macarthur Street and car parking is immediately in front of the meeting room. Visitors are most welcome and supper will be available after the meeting.

The meeting will feature presentations from three of our members:

Judy Rainsford will talk on the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) Girls of World War II. Judy has provided some background information which is included below.

Paul Ewoldt will discuss his fascination with, and his collection of aviation ephemera that he has acquired over more than 20 years. Paul will display some of the items and describe how and where he found such treasures.

Ken Garland will discuss the evolution of the Sport aircraft movement since his involvement in the mid 1960s. Amateur built aircraft account for approximately 10% of Australia's civil aircraft registrations (not counting ultralights). Ken will also differentiate between Recreational Aircraft (ultralights), ABAA (Amateur Built Aircraft Acceptance) and Experimental Aircraft and explain the differences as far as Amateur Builders are concerned. He will show examples of Kit verses Scratch built aircraft and explain the 51% rule and the Certification and on going maintenance processes. The presentation will be backed up by a pictorial presentation.

Committee Meeting

A Committee meeting, commencing at 6.15pm, will be held immediately prior to the September meeting.

August Meeting

At the start of the August meeting, John Scott reminded members of the approaching centenary of the death of the first Australian as a result of an aeroplane accident. Charles Lindsay Campbell lost his life in the crash of a Bristol Prier monoplane at Byfleet near Brooklands in the United Kingdom on August 3, 1912. Details of his life and contribution to the early progress of aviation in Australia are given in four issues of *Loops & Landings*; see *Southern Skies*, October to December, 2011, and February, 2012.

The second anniversary of his death was noted by an **in Memoriam**, inserted in the *West Australian* on Monday, August 3, 1914: "In loving memory of Charles Lindsay Campbell, killed by accidental fall of his monoplane whilst flying at Brooklands, Surrey, England on August 3, 1912. Remains cremated at Woking Crematorium, England, ashes interred in Presbyterian Cemetery Karrakatta, Western Australia. Inserted by his widow, sisters, and Lin and Keith."

It is a sombre coincidence that on August 3, 1914, Germany declared war on France, and as a consequence Great Britain declared war on Germany at 11 pm the following day. Members were asked to reflect on a century of loss of human lives as a result of aerial activity in both peace and war.

Peter Coates presented a gallery of images from the 2011 Australian International Air Show held at Avalon. There were over 400 images, mainly taken by ATC colleague Bob Livingstone plus one or two others, with about 30 of those taken at the RAAF Museum, Point Cook, where Peter and Bob visited during the period.

Peter began by describing how the role of the Air Show control tower had been expanded from that of previous shows. "Aircraft Ground Operations" had previously been responsible for coordinating with other ground agencies the allocation of aircraft parking positions, fuel requirements and marshallers. This was done by radio and phone. In 2011, the role of the Airshow control tower was expanded to carry out aircraft ground control as well.

Using an Aerodrome diagram, he showed his areas of responsibility and those of the ground marshallers, the various parking areas of the aircraft types and other features – airshow and permanent towers, and civil terminal. He described how Avalon Tower does not normally have a 'Ground' facility and how the Airshow tower was responsible for the dedicated 'Airshow Ground' frequency, which meant all the areas other than the Runway. This applied for the whole period (lead-up, trade and display days and for the two days following). The images depicted the interior of the Airshow Tower with the ringmaster and his team, RAAF advisors, safety personnel, CASA and the Airservices ATCs (who were there during the display periods only).

Peter described how Taxiway 'C', just south of the Airshow tower was important as an 'overflow' between successive arrivals/departures due runway occupancy requirements, and because the full length of the parallel taxiway was used for aircraft parking. Marshallers were kept busy clearing the public when required, and corporate jets were parked there when they arrived and departed from time to time on ferry flights to and from Melbourne and Essendon as well as demonstration flights. Of particular note was the importance of not delaying the JetStar and Tiger operations.

The majority of the images were of arriving, departing or participating aircraft – grouped by type. Peter made special note of the C-27J Spartan, as our new purchase and that our 'H' and 'J' Hercules did not spend a lot of time there as they were involved in the Christchurch earthquake relief! He also recalled that the Canadian CV580s launched on the Saturday afternoon to fight a fire in western Victoria.

Thanks to Peter for another interesting presentation on Australian aviation.

Special Thanks

Special thanks must go to Keith White for his most entertaining and revealing episodes on the life of W.E. Hart. Keith's research and dedication have provided an insight into this otherwise not-so-well-known Australian aviator, other than his holding the first Australian-issued Aviators' Certificate. Keith's series ends with this issue as Hart experiences a near fatal accident and he returns to his profession of Dentistry. However, as Keith says, this research is still a "works in progress" and he'll gladly accept any new information on the life of Hart.

Vale

Olga Tarling

Olga Tarling, who was Australia's first female Air Traffic Controller, passed away in Queensland on 15 August. Olga spent the initial part of her ATC career at Essendon and later in Brisbane and Townsville. Following a successful career in tower and en-route positions she went on to be responsible for training of new recruits at the ATC College and in Queensland.

She was one of 8 female pilots who flew as First Officers with Southern Airlines, which operated DH Herons and Doves in Victoria. When Ansett took over the airline in 1958, female pilots were not even a consideration, and Olga therefore applied for training as an ATC.

The Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA)

By Judy Rainsford

In the early years of World War II, superiority in the air had become Churchill's obsession. His note to Sir Charles Craven, Secretary of State for Air, ended:

"We must aim at nothing less than having an Air Force twice as strong as the German Air Force by the end of 1943. This ought not to be impossible if a renewed vast effort is made now. It is the very least that can be contemplated, since no other way of winning the war has yet been proposed." This on 12 July 1941.

A gigantic chain of aircraft production would form the links to achieve this goal. From bauxite mines in the British Empire to aluminium production, thence to aircraft, the chain grew stronger. But the missing link was people to deliver them, the 'backroom boys'.

Inevitably men, 30 pilots were recruited in 1939 on the initiative of Gerard 'Pop' d'Erlanger, director of British Airways and a keen private pilot, who anticipated the growth of an acute shortage of pilots due the exacerbating hostilities in Europe. "Was there a reservist's Air Force in which people like him could enlist?" He enquired. "No" was the response.

D'Erlanger's suggestion to form such a unit from holders of pilot licences with at least 250 hours in the air was agreed by the Director of Civil Aviation, Sir Francis Shelmerdine, and 1,000 licence-holders were contacted. One hundred replied and 30 were tested and chosen.

D'Erlanger was in charge of a group that he envisaged as an aerial courier service for VIP's, medicines and the wounded. But the demand was ferrying aircraft between factories and ferry pools throughout Britain.

'ATA' – the *Ancient and Tattered Airmen*, they called themselves - an amusing explanation of their badges. But this was one of the most exclusive and unrecognised flying outfits of the war. To be eligible for membership you had to be ineligible for the RAF but still able to fly – a different sort of pilot who would become an exclusive and unrecognised elite - these 'Oddballs' of the air were intellectuals, artists, bank managers, civil servants, wounded veterans, flying aces.

Enthusiastic predictions of a role for women pilots were offered early in 1938. The RAF's opposition was granite. At the outbreak of war all civil aviation was grounded. No-one thought of handing the ferrying of military aircraft to civilians – certainly not to women.

Amy Johnson had inspired the world. Pauline Gower, who excelled at school and took up flying as 'the perfect sedentary occupation' after serious illness, was to follow her father into the Conservative Party. Her contacts with politicians and senior representatives would plot a successful track past the unwelcoming desks of wartime 'brass'. With initiative and skilled and tireless lobbying, Pauline Gower met with D'Erlanger, whose response to "Why women?" was 'Why not?"

He accompanied Gower to meet with Shelmerdine and Pauline Gower came away with permission to recruit 12 women pilots and the understanding that she would be in charge of this youthful flying group.

There were provisos: men would not have to fly with the women; a minimum of 500 hours solo experience was required for women candidates; Pauline's initial quota was cut from 12 to 8. Eventual success in flying operational aircraft against RAF resistance advanced their reputation and kudos.

The women flew in aircraft unarmed and were given no instrument training, no lifejackets. Most gained instrument expertise from male pilots who appreciated their predicament when so often flights were above cloud, in mist and fog and with doubtful radio contacts.

At first the only RAF machines the women were allowed to fly were trainers - open cockpit De Havilland Moths, and later, Miles Magisters (with a blistering top speed of just 132 mph). The women struggled for two years to be pilots in fighters and five years to fly them to Europe. Their favourite aircraft was the Spitfire, with its narrow cockpit well-suited to the slim pilots. So was born *'the Spitfire Girls'*. Despite their nickname, the *'Always Terrified Women'*, they were a formidable flying elite.

In all, the ATA delivered 308,567 aircraft, including 57,286 Spitfires, 29,401 Hurricanes, 9,805 Lancasters and 7,039 Barracudas. Tempests and Typhoons, Ansons, Short Stirlings and Flying Fortresses – each women pilot was her own captain and clutched her Flight Authorisation Card (for any RAF or WAAF operator who questioned her judgement) and her cherished Ferry Pilot's Notes as she

boarded whichever aircraft was listed for her delivery. In mid-1942 the ATA was moving more aircraft each day than British Airways did on a typical day in 2006.

The girls lived in a continual state of stress in the nerve-wracking tasks of keeping themselves and their aircraft in one piece. Their blackboard, too, carried the names of the girls who did not return from a flight.

There were 164 ATA Girls – flying addicts who travelled from five continents to ferry combat aircraft during World War II. They were the only women from among the Western Allies who flew. In Russia and Germany women flew as test pilots and in combat. Hitler commanded that his women pilots were not to be harmed.

In Australia Lores Bonney and Nancy Bird Walton were firmly grounded.

Hear some of the exploits of these ATA women fliers at the September meeting.

New Books

QF32 by Captain Richard de Crespigny
(Extract from review in the *Brisbane Times*.)

It could have been one of the world's worst air disasters - a Qantas A380 had left Singapore on its way to Sydney when a mid-air explosion shattered one of the aircraft's engines. Despite the chaos that could have ensued, Captain Richard de Crespigny remained calm and landed the plane, bringing all 469 passengers and crew safely to the tarmac.

That was November 4, 2010. Now, upon the release of his book *QF32*, the 55-year-old pilot recalls the motions he went through on that potentially-fatal flight.

"The sound of the engine failure was really like a backfire in a car - like a boom - so that is something we just react to instinctively with procedures that we learn in the simulator..." de Crespigny said. A second boom, however, about half a second later, was unusual. It brought up questions of whether one or two engines had been affected, he said, and how severe the damage was.

Captain Richard De Crespigny, who had been flying for 35 years, said foremost in the flight crew's minds was that the passengers had concerns and needed information.

A "must read" for all those interested in aviation. Available at all good bookshops and on-line. (RRP $34.99, but much cheaper at Big W and on-line)

Bert Hinkler – The Most Daring Man in the World
by Grantlee Kieza
(from the ABC web-site):

He was just Bert from Bundaberg, and then he became the most daring man in the golden era of aviation.

When he discovered the thrill of early aviation, everything changed. When he flew solo around the world with just a compass, a torch and the page of an atlas to guide him, when his exploits made him the darling of crowds from America to Europe to Australia, when he completed daring missions as a fighter pilot in World War I, and when he became Mussolini's favourite aviator, that's when Australian Bert Hinkler was dubbed 'the most daring man in the world'.

Here for the first time is the full-blooded biography he deserves, a book which uncovers the complex character behind the public idol. A man whose life was filled with secrets, including two wives on two continents at the same time. Bert Hinkler lived a life of soaring highs and turbulent lows, a restless, adventure-filled existence as one of the Lords of Distance in the golden age of flight.

Available at good bookshops, the ABC Shop and on-line. (RRP $32.99)

Flying the Southern Cross by Michael Molkentin
Forward by John Ulm
(Review from the Fishpond website)

Australian aviators Charles Kingsford Smith and Charles Ulm made the first trans-Pacific flight in 1928 in an aircraft constructed largely of timber and fabric, the *Southern Cross*. With Americans Jim Warner as radio operator and Harry Lyon as navigator, they made the trip from Oakland, California, in nine days, facing electrical storms, torrential rain, equipment breakdowns, fuel shortages and the ever-present fear of engine failure. In *Flying the Southern Cross*, Michael Molkentin uses logbook entries, the airmen's memoirs, contemporary newspaper accounts and official documents, supplemented by a range of historic photographs, to give a gripping account of that epoch-making flight and its aftermath. He takes readers into the *Southern Cross*, a place where courage, skill and endurance could, with luck, outweigh the fearful risks of a long air journey. Above all, he brings to life the airmen themselves, four very different men who made aviation history.

Available at selected bookshops, including the ABC Shop and on-line. (RRP $34.99)

The William Ewart Hart Centenary Celebration
By Keith White
SEPTEMBER, 1912
BACK TO DENTISTRY

At the beginning of spring in 1912, I should imagine W.E. Hart was thinking that the month of September would be a positive month for him with his new monoplane all but completed and the expectation of successful flights when visiting Wagga Wagga for the flying exhibition which was postponed from last month, and not forgetting the first anniversary of his first flight in his Bristol Boxkite on 25 September.

As well, on 1 September, *Life* magazine published a six page article of high praise about him, entitled "Our Ablest Flying Man", by G.C. Percival, the last paragraphs of which read:

"Honours for the Aviator

An evidence of the esteem and admiration in which his natal town holds him is seen in the fact that on the occasion of its recent municipal jubilee Mr Hart was treated as a distinguished guest at the banquet forming a part of the commemoration programme; when he treated the company to a speech as full of modesty of spirit as of clear mastery of his subject, which, of course, is aviation.

Still more recently, Mr. Hart was accorded a "Continental" by the residents of Parramatta in the beautiful park adjacent to the town, and was presented with a purse of sovereigns and an illuminated address. Should all go well - as every Australian will devoutly wish it may in more ways than one - our aviator will live to earn the yet wider appreciation of the Commonwealth, of

which he is so worthy a son, and in whose complex life and movement he is a by no means insignificant worker."

Unfortunately, the Commonwealth does not seem to have agreed with this sentiment. However, that has not prevented others from recognising his significant efforts in helping to establish what was then a new form of powered flight in the Australian society. This recognition has taken different forms as follows:

1. There is the monument erected in Parramatta Park commemorating his cross-country flight from Penrith to Parramatta in November, 1911. Funds to cover erection costs were raised by public appeal and it was unveiled in 1963. Unfortunately, the inscription on the monument itself contains a number of errors of fact, which hopefully will be corrected in the near future now that our Society has alerted the Park Trust to these errors.

2. A small number of local councils in Sydney have each named a suburban street after him.

3. The Holroyd and District Historical Society operates the Linnwood Museum in Guildford, NSW, which embraces a Hall of Fame into which, on 24 May 1987, was inducted

"WILLIAM EWART ('Billy') HART
AUSTRALIA'S FIRST AVIATOR
INTO THE LINNWOOD HALL OF FAME
for the Achievement of Excellence in the Western Region of Sydney."

4. Two plaques were laid in Penrith. One was organised by the Nepean District Historical Society Inc., the Australian Air League, Deakin Wing and the Australian Army Supply Depot, and placed in a garden inside the Depot. It has since been removed before the depot was closed. The other was placed on a pillar in a Penrith shopping mall which no longer exists. The present whereabouts of both plaques is unknown.

5. A less permanent form of recognition was sponsored by the Parramatta Foundation Week Council in 1991 with four literary competitions relating to the history of Parramatta. The theme of each competition was Parramatta's part in establishing aviation in Australia, with two of them dealing specifically with William Ewart Hart's contribution to our aviation history.

6. Today, 2 August, 2012, an aviation enthusiast told me of an area of land at Penrith being used by a model aircraft club to fly its members' models. It is identified as "HART FIELD" in memory of W.E Hart ... more next month when I know more!

To return to Hart's activities during September, 1912, with the new propeller fitted to his monoplane, any necessary adjustments, followed by testing, were proceeding satisfactorily.

Then, during the morning of 4 September, 1912, he made two successful local flights. His third flight of the day came later in the afternoon when he extended his flight north over Freeman's Reach. On returning to his airfield at about 5.30pm and flying at about 200 feet high, according to witnesses, the aeroplane fell in a spiral to the ground and was completely wrecked. Hart was very seriously injured. Fortunately, experienced help was close at hand to remove him from his wrecked aeroplane and arrange transport to Windsor Hospital, where he spent some two months recovering from his injuries.

Other witness reports vary concerning the accident. One newspaper report stated: "... when not far his hangar, his engine went wrong. He was a couple of hundred feet up at the time, and was observed to be trying to plane down, when the machine seemed to get out of control. It fell with a terrible crash.

Hundreds of people witnessed the sensational spectacle, and the general opinion was that the aviator could surely not come out of the ordeal alive. His mechanics, who had been awaiting his return to the tent he used as a hangar were the first to reach the wreck, and it was with much difficulty they removed him from among the tangle. (In another report, he was described as "found in a dazed condition with his legs jammed among the wreckage."). They were shortly joined by an ambulance student living nearby, Mr. Headford, who witnessed the accident. He and Mrs W. Percival (mother of Edgar) rendered first aid, stopping the bleeding from the severe wounds to his head and legs."

Two medical men were also promptly brought in motor cars. The unfortunate aviator was conveyed to the Windsor Hospital, four miles away, in one of the Army Medical Corps wagons."

On 5 September, 1912, *The Sydney Morning Herald* reported: "the spectators noticed that his motor had stopped. He thereupon tried to plane down, but the machine dipped and rushed headlong to earth." It is noted that in this report, Mr. Headford is described as "the leading officer in the local ambulance corps, and not "an ambulance student", as reported above.

When Hart had his accident, which was, in fact, a near-death experience for this 27 year old aviator, he had, during the previous twelve months, been experiencing situations which few, if any, aviators and certainly no member of the public had encountered. He was a true pioneer of the phenomena of powered flight.

Some three months later, on 8 December, 1912, the newspaper, *The Sydney Times*, published an article he wrote in which he expressed his thoughts about the accident and its repercussions. I have repeated the article below, and, in doing so, I have typed his sub-headings in capital letters as his article was published. The headline reads:

THE 'BIRDMAN' PHILOSOPHER

AUSTRALIA'S FIRST AVIATOR TELLS OF HIS SMASH-UP AND COMPLETE RECOVERY.

WILL FLY AGAIN NEXT MARCH.

For the *Sunday Times* by W.E. HART.

I never felt better in my life, and although I am still forced to walk on crutches because of a wound in my left leg, the result of the compound fracture of that member, I feel practically no ill effect from my smash up. Now that it is all over, and I am myself again, as it were, I can reflect calmly on the fact that it was a bad smash up. There was hardly (no) portion of my body, so at any rate the matron of the Richmond (sic) Hospital tells me, that was not bruised or broken. I had a nasty fracture at the front of the skull which went almost from ear to ear while the scalp at the base was pretty badly torn. My face was

knocked about a bit, and my left eye badly cut by the control lever of my monoplane. My left elbow still has the marks of several stitches which the doctors put in. My body was a mass of bruises, but fortunately nothing was damaged internally. My legs suffered the most, the right being broken at the knee-cap, and the left in a compound fracture below the knee. But what of it all!

IT WAS WORTH IT

I realise today, that I have had a most wonderful escape, but I am progressing so rapidly that in a few weeks I will be hardly able to realise that I have had a smash. Although my injuries were severe, they could easily have been much worse, and my whole accident seems to be made up of a number of wonderful escapes. Take the injuries to my head. Had the fracture and the lacerated wound been reverse, and the base of my skull broken, I would not be writing this article for you to-day. The control lever which gave me the black eye which I still exhibit, just missed gouging out that eye, and blinding me for life. A wire which poked itself in my back, just missed puncturing my kidneys. The doctors at first held out little hope of saving me from a stiff leg, but I guarantee that by Christmas I will be able to do a stop dance, and that my legs will be as supple as the next man's. More remarkable than anything else,

I REMEMBER NOTHING OF THE ACCIDENT

and that has saved my nerve. There is nothing I would enjoy better than a run up aloft right now. In fact I remember only one thing about the day of the accident, although my friends tell me that I crowded a great deal into it, and the recollection is but a dim one. The last clearly defined image on my mind is the unromantic action of pillowing my head on my coat for asleep in the late train trip to Richmond the night before. All of the flights that day - and my friends tell me I made many – of a game of billiards, etc. I have no recollection - just the one dim memory.

I am about 200ft above my flying ground, which I had decided some days before not to leave until I had thoroughly tested the machine. Away in front of me is the country over which I had flown so often in my biplane, why should I not go out there now? I will - and then a blank again. It appears I went out and all around the surrounding country, and met with the mishap just as I got back to my shed again.

My next image was a clean bed, and two doctors, Dr. Kearney, of Parramatta and Dr. Hinder standing at the foot. "Hullo, Dr. Kearney! Hullo Dr. Hinder. What are you two doing here? Who's sick?"

They were my first words and in the brain cells which we call memory, they follow next after my good-byes to my family on the night before the accident.

I refused to believe that it was myself that was ill, and absolutely rebuted (sic) the idea that I had been smashed up in my monoplane. The only reason I could give myself for my presence in a hospital bed was that I had been thrown out of a motor car.

However, it did not worry me. I went in for aviation over 12 months ago with my eyes open. I knew how other men had fared before me - good aviators they were too - and I knew that I was

TAKING A HAI\D WITH DEATH.

It never bothered me, and not once when making flights did I expect to fall.

Had I done so, I would have come to grief much earlier than I did. Although badly injured, I did not trouble. I asked the doctors to keep me in bed just as long as was necessary, but no longer. I was content to stay there. It was the price.

I have had the fun, and may I say it with all modesty, a little fame, so why should I object to the price, which, after all, has not been a heavy one. I have always cultivated a cheerful philosophy in business, and in everything else, and this has stood me in good stead, throughout the illness which followed my accident.

I will fly again. Why should I not? A friend of mine, who is a great dancer, wrote to me. Sympathising with my hard lot. They are her terms, not mine, and expressing the supposition that I would not fly again.

Why should I not fly again? I wrote to her in reply. She had just been hurt dancing, so I said in the letter: Just because you have been hurt dancing, will you not dance again?

I reckon that I should be

IN THE AIR ONCE MORE ABOUT MARCH

next year. We are present working on a small biplane, but I will reconstruct the monoplane, and fly in that too. But there is one point. I will fly no more professionally, but simply for my own amusement, and in order to carry out experiments, which I have in mind, and I will have to devote the main portion of my time to my dental practice.

And now for what I think were the causes of my fall. Eye-witnesses of the accident tell me that the machine fell in a spiral. That proves to me that one of the wings must have become warped. It could not have been a 'pocket' in the air, for the machine would have righted herself. I could not have done the wrong thing because piloting an aeroplane is just like piloting a motor car or a bicycle, and the right thing to do at the right moment becomes second nature.

Neither could I have done what a member of the staff of this paper suggested, performed the movements of righting my biplane in mistake for those of righting a monoplane. My control in both cases was exactly the same as I had installed the Bristol control in the monoplane. My own idea is that

THE CONTROLLING WIRE BROKE

and, of course the machine could do nothing else but fall. All the wires of my machine were tested to stand eight times the strain that would normally be put upon them, but I believe that accidentally the control wire was made tighter than the main warp wire, and the strain that should have been taken by the latter was forced upon the former. Under ordinary circumstances, this smaller wire could stand the strain, but a sudden gust overtaxed it, and down we came.

Considerable divergence of opinion has been given expression to concerning the distance I fell, but I think, in fact I am absolutely sure that it was about 200 ft. The average person has a very poor idea of height, and when eye-witnesses came to the hospital, I asked them how far I fell they all had different distances.

There will be no marks visible, nor any permanent results from my injuries; so I am very fortunate. Flying is

safe enough if you use discretion and are not over enthusiastic.

When it becomes popular we might be holding the flying records here in Australia. Why not? Just outside my hospital room window, however, was a tall tree, the height of which I was able to ascertain. Each one then I asked to tell me how much higher than the tree I fell. They all agreed that it was between three and four times. This works out at the distance I mentioned, and I think it is fairly accurate.

I am longing to be in a machine again, but my philosophy teaches me to wait until I am absolutely fit, which I am convinced from the rapid progress I have made will not be long." (End of Hart's newspaper article.)

With his decision that his professional flying career was over, Hart turned his attention back to his first profession, dentistry, but, as time moved on, he continued with aviation as a hobby, including designing and building a biplane, which he flew in January 1914 - and that's another story!

EPILOGUE

Well, readers, that concludes my monthly series of articles celebrating "The William Ewart Hart Centenary" in aviation from September, 1911 to September 1912 inclusive. I trust you enjoyed reading them as much as I did writing them. I hope that, at some time in the future, his personal papers and business records will become available for more research. Meanwhile, should any reader learn of other stories, or variations and/or contradictions to what I have written, or want further information, please do not hesitate to contact me ... or you may even care to write your own story as it is important that the Hart story is told in its entirety. After all, this series of articles is really a "work in progress" and could not have been written without the help of a number of people who have contributed with knowledge and time. Many have been acknowledged through the series. To the others, including our Society and my ever-patient wife, Pat, my grateful thanks.

On the point of Hart's personal papers, etc., I was advised again recently by the Mitchell Library, Sydney, that there is no record of any being donated to recognised repositories such as the Mitchell and the State Library of Victoria.

I hope I have done justice to this story of Hart's flying career as I know it, and that his aviation activities and their contribution to our aviation knowledge and history are never forgotten. After all, he was the first person to be awarded an "aviator's certificate" in Australia, and he laid the groundwork on which others could and did build and continue to build, a wonderful history of Australian Aviation.

Finally, at times through these articles, I have asked myself the odd question, hopefully to be answered by later research e.g. the use of the words "alone" and "solo". I hope the results of my research into such questions will be published at the pleasure of our newsletter editor as and when they are resolved.

Until then, Happy Landings!

Keith White.

AHSA Meetings

Melbourne

Meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of the month at RAAF Association, 24 Camberwell Rd, Hawthorn East, in the auditorium. Parking is available under the building – enter from the lane at the south end. The meetings start at 7.30pm - ring the bell if the front door is shut. A number of members meet casually for dinner from 6.00pm at the Tower Hotel opposite the RAAFA. Visitors welcome – contact Antony Grage on 0418 170 395.

Brisbane

Meetings are held at 7.00pm for 7.30pm on the last Friday of each month at the Royal Queensland Aero Club, Archerfield. Visitors are welcome; contact Don Furlonger (07) 3371 5867.

31 August 2012 Guest Speaker will be Bob Livingstone who had two short trips overseas earlier this year. The first was to Papua New Guinea following in the footsteps of the Australians as they pushed the Japanese back to the N E coast from Kokoda to Buna and Sanananda, finding and identifying various aviation artefacts on the way, as well as a visit to the Port Moresby Military Museum.

The second trip was to Vietnam, driving 2000km from Hanoi to Saigon through the highlands following the Ho Chi Minh Trail, visiting various wartime locations and their aircraft displays. The presentation will be accompanied by a selection of photographs from both trips.

Calendar of Events

1 September 2012 Aircraft Showcase – RAAF Fighters – Temora Aviation Museum. Temora NSW

8 September 2012 Wings over Warwick – Annual Fly-in. Warwick Qld.

13-15 September 2012 AUSFLY – Sports Aircraft Association of Australia. Narromine NSW.

15 September 2012 Coffs Harbour Air Show. Coffs Harbour NSW

15 September 2012 Aircraft Showcase – Fighters – Temora Aviation Museum. Temora NSW

6 October 2012 Aircraft Showcase – Trainers to Fighters – Temora Aviation Museum. Temora NSW

13-14 October 2012 Jamestown Air Show, Jamestown SA.

20 October 2012 Aircraft Showcase – North American Aviation – Temora Aviation Museum. Temora NSW

4 November 2012 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) Inc at P.O. Box K346, Haymarket NSW 1238 or to the Editor, Warwick Bigsworth via E-mail *(madsen2010@optusnet.com.au)* or on (02) 8824 7814.

Thanks

Thanks to Peter Coates, Judy Rainsford, John Scott and Keith White for their contributions to this newsletter.

LOOPS AND LANDINGS

Inspired by John Kingsford-Smith

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,... – Part 7

"In November 1938, the American-German association gave a reception to honour Hanna Reitsch. At this reception I met a wonderful man, Stewart Herman, who was deeply involved with an American church in Berlin. I did not believe in love at first sight until it happened to me... We saw a lot of each other in Germany, and when I returned to England in 1939, to my delight he visited me. Like many people our paths were heading in different directions, and we went our separate ways." This quote from *My God! It's a Woman* seemed to me to reveal a profound dimension to Nancy's experience of Germany as the Second World War rapidly approached. Stewart was twenty nine years old at the time, and was pastor of the interdenominational American Church in Berlin. He would have been well aware of the humanitarian disaster that was already occurring in Europe, and of the demands that would be placed on him in the event of war, which now seemed inevitable. On the other hand, for Nancy there was the call of family and country urging her to return to Australia. It must have been a distressing farewell when they finally separated in London in 1939. In *My God! It's a Woman,* Nancy explained the humanitarian role Stewart played following the outbreak of war: "Stewart not only liaised between the British and Germans, but refused to leave Berlin until he was shipped out on the *Gothenburg* exchange of internees. Later, he was the first civilian to return. He worked tirelessly for the displaced persons through both military and Council of Churches, to obtain visas for people wanting to get to America and to collect orphans in Austria and place them in Swiss homes. The reports he wrote in 1938 and 1939 are now being published in Germany by the Council of Churches. " In a postscript she wrote of Stewart: "I have continued to meet him over the years, the last time in 1987. He looked remarkably well and although he had suffered a heart attack the previous year, was still as upright and articulate as ever. I feel a tremendous warmth, admiration and respect for this man." Stewart Winfield Herman Jr. died in 2006, aged 96 years.

Within two decades from the end of the Great War, Australians were again being repulsed by news from, and about Germany. Australian journalists, including an editor from *The Argus*, Alexander Chisholm, reported from Germany during 1938. Chisholm's book, *The Incredible Year*, provides a chilling account of Hitler and the atmosphere in Germany at the time. In early November, 1938, the ABC broadcast, to Melbourne and Sydney listeners, a report from William Macmahon Ball following his strictly supervised inspection of the Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp. Ball's experience of this inspection turned him from a pacifist to acceptance that war was inevitable, indeed necessary to wipe out such oppression. Then came *Kristallnacht*, and Australians were again informed by news reports of the worsening situation in National Socialist Germany. The ABC soon realised that Australia had another potential correspondent in Berlin, one Miss Nancy Bird. Nancy was approached with a request from the ABC to talk about her experiences to Australians via short wave from Berlin, and she agreed.

Being in the public eye is seldom comfortable. Charles and Anne Lindbergh blamed publicity for the murder of their first child in 1931. Since then they had avoided newspaper journalists and had attempted to isolate themselves abroad in temporary homes, first in Kent in the UK, and then on the Island of Illiec off the coast of Brittany. But now, on the eve of Nancy's ABC broadcast, Charles Lindbergh had lost his universally accepted status as "world hero" because of adverse publicity. Following his visit to Russia during August 1938, his derogatory remarks about Russia and its Air Force, which he made in private conversation, were leaked to the press. By the time he was in Germany in October, this had become world news. Lindbergh was informed by the Russians that he had been declared an enemy of the people of the Soviet Union, and would be arrested if he ever set foot in Russia again. What really upset his fellow Americans was his acceptance of *The Order of the German Eagle* from Adolf Hitler, and his apparent intention to keep it. It was generally concluded that the Lindberghs were sympathetic to much of the philosophy of The Third Reich. By Sunday evening, November 27, when Nancy was programmed by the ABC to speak to her fellow Australians, Germany had descended even further in the opinion of the west. But as far as the Germans were concerned

Nancy was an internationally famous British subject, for whom they had gone out of their way to provide access to their civil aviation operations. As part of her broadcast, Germany would be expecting praise, not criticism, from the beneficiary of their generosity. On the other hand her Australian listeners would be expecting some comment about the current political turmoil in Germany.

Somewhere in the archives of the ABC there may still exist a recording of Nancy's talk to the nation. *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Monday, November 28, does contain a summary. Plain common sense seems to have been behind the preparation for her talk, because she introduces Elly Beinhorn, someone known to Australians, as her host rather than Nazi Germany, and speaks more broadly about her study tour of civil airlines in Europe generally. She gives details of her future plans to visit Scandinavia before returning to England at the end of January. She concluded: "Elly Beinhorn has asked me to send her very best wishes to her Australian friends and to say that she hopes to visit us again soon." As an indication of the sensitivity of the time, Nancy said nothing about the political situation in Germany. Even as late as 1961, when her first autobiography, *Born to Fly*, was published she has little to say about Germany. When *My God! It's a Woman* was published in 1990, details of her visit there were included, together with her time with Stewart Herman. Stewart would have known of Charles Lindbergh's fall from grace, because of the reporting of his controversial opinions, and would have realised the danger Nancy's reputation faced through any misinterpretation of her talk via the ABC. Stewart may not have been a speech writer for Nancy, but perhaps some good advice from him resulted in her talk giving no apparent offence either at home or abroad.

As Nancy took notes, and collected reference material, during her *Grand Tour* of civil aviation in the northern hemisphere, the idea of an exhibition on her return to Australia began to take shape. She felt an obligation to share her experiences with her compatriots, and at the same time repay the hospitality of the overseas airlines that had helped her by advertising their services in her exhibition. She adopted the name, *Wings the World Over*, for the exhibition. Nancy conceived her idea before she had the opportunity to visit the *16th Salon de L'Aviation* early in early December in Paris. This was one of the series of biennial exhibitions held in the Grand Palais since the very first 1909 *Exposition Internationale de Locomotion Aerienne*. As it turned out, the 1938 exhibition was to be the last before the start of the Second World War. The exhibitions were resumed in 1946 after the war. Ten nations participated in the 16th exhibition, displaying 54 aircraft of French manufacture and 20 from abroad. Not since 1909 had there been such an increase in the number of combat aircraft on display. Overseas manufacturers brought to Paris the Hawker Hurricane, Supermarine Spitfire, Dornier Do 17, Fokker 23 and others. Large models of the new PBY-1 were shown by the Consolidated Aircraft Corporation of San Diego. Although Nancy noted the heavy military emphasis, there were sufficient civil aircraft to strongly influence her planning for *Wings the World Over*.

Elly Beinhorn invited Nancy to fly with her to the Paris exhibition, and to help with map reading along the way. In *My God! It's a Woman*, she wrote: "I remember map reading for Elly as we flew a Messerschmitt 108 to the Paris Air Show. I was extremely surprised when I found a place on the map called Charleville. As we flew over it, I wondered which nostalgic person had named an outback Australian town after this place." The nostalgic person of Nancy's musing is at rest in the cemetery of St Anne's Church, Ryde, not far from where she was to build her family home at Pymble. He was William Alcock Tully who, as Commissioner of Lands in Queensland, surveyed the town site in 1868, and named it Charleville after his boyhood village in Ireland. The Irish name was in turn derived from Charleville in France. The French Charleville had been captured and heavily damaged by the Germans in 1815, 1870 and 1914. It was again to suffer a similar fate in 1940. Elly Beinhorn's civil registered Bf 108 was required by regulation to carry a swastika on both sides of its vertical fin as a symbol of Nazi Germany's unity and aspirations. During May, 1940, Nancy must have paused to reflect on the incongruity of her own experience as a crew member, on board a swastika bearing Messerschmitt, flying a sortie from Berlin to Paris.

Nancy received a further acknowledgement while she was in Paris. The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported: "Miss Nancy Bird, the Australian airwoman, has been elected as an honorary member of *Les Vieilles Tiges*, the noted French association of pre-war and war-time pilots.". **John Scott.**

AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW) Inc

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Southern Skies

The Newsletter of AHSA (NSW) Inc

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October Meeting

The October meeting will be held at the Powerhouse Museum on Wednesday 3rd October 2012, at 7.45pm. The venue will be the Amenities Room, at the southern end of the Administration building. Entry is via Macarthur Street and car parking is immediately in front of the meeting room. Visitors are most welcome and supper will be available after the meeting.

The guest speaker will be Dr Gordon Pike BE (Hons), PhD, FRAeS, FIEAust, FBIS, AFAIAA, CPEng, whose topic will be:

PK-AFV and the Broome Air Raid on March 3, 1942

Gordon's talk will cover various aspects of the Japanese air raid on Broome in 1942. This included the loss of 15 flying boats on Roebuck Bay, seven land based aircraft, and the famous story of the "Diamond Dakota" shot down north of Broome on that day. PK-AFV was a Douglas DC-3, operated by KNILM, shot down by Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service fighter aircraft, resulting in the deaths of four passengers and the loss of diamonds worth an estimated £150,000 – £300,000.

Gordon Pike retired from Optus in late 2009 following a 30 year career in the satellite communication industry. This included responsibility for many of the satellite related activities of SingTel Optus in Australia - including the project management of 7 of the 10 commercial communications satellites built and launched since the first in 1985. He was the deputy program manager for the other 3. He is currently a part-time consultant to NBN Co advising on the satellite component of the National Broadband Network.

Gordon graduated from the University of Adelaide in 1971 with a first class honours degree in Mechanical Engineering. He followed this with a Doctor of Philosophy in Aeronautical Engineering from the University of Sydney in 1976. Being raised in Adelaide, his early fascination with space as a career was fuelled by the activities at nearby Woomera in the 1950's and 1960's as well as the Apollo lunar program.

Initial employment included an appointment as a Research Scientist at the Weapons Research Establishment in Adelaide specialising in high speed aerodynamics and ballistics. He later moved to England where he worked at British Aerospace (now EADS Astrium) as a Senior Design Engineer and Subsystem Manager on a variety of aircraft and space projects. He joined the newly formed Aussat Pty. Ltd. in Sydney in 1982 and spent three years as part of the on-site team at the Hughes Aircraft Company in Los Angeles during the construction and launch of the three first generation Aussat communications satellites.

His special interest is launch systems and he has spent extended periods at major launch facilities in China (Xichang), South America (French Guiana) and the USA (Kennedy Space Center, Florida).

Gordon has worked closely with various Australian Government Departments and Agencies on a number of commissioned studies and committees and has been an adviser to the Australian delegation to the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

In 1996, Gordon was appointed to an Adjunct Professorship in Space Engineering at the University of Queensland. He is also serving as a curriculum advisor to the new Space Engineering course introduced at the University of Sydney in 2000.

Gordon has over twenty-five unclassified publications in a variety of technical areas in Australia, the USA, and the UK. He has conducted seminars at the University of Queensland and courses through the Australian Defence Force Academy in Canberra, the Continuing Education Department of Sydney University as well as numerous conferences.

In 1996 the Royal Aeronautical Society (Australian Division) honoured him with its National Lecture Prize; in 1997 Gordon was awarded the inaugural Space Pioneer award of the National Space Society for his work in the Australian space industry over the years.

And he is a qualified private pilot (albeit relatively inactive!).

Please join us to hear Gordon on this special piece of Australian aviation history that happened 70 years ago.

Committee Meeting

A Committee meeting, commencing at 6.15pm, will be held immediately prior to the October meeting.

September Meeting

Judy Rainsford spoke on the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) Girls of World War II. She introduced the talk with reference to the book, *Spitfire Women of World War II*, by Giles Whittell. He wrote about many of the individuals who persevered despite incredible objection from many others in the RAF and government. Judy's talk was accompanied by many images of women pilots including Pauline Gower, "Jackie" Cochran and Betty Keith-Jopp, as well as some of the aircraft flown, such as the Short Stirling, Avro Lancaster, Hawker Hurricane and the Supermarine Spitfire.

The service might not have happened had it not been for the efforts of Britain's first female commercial pilot, Pauline Gower, to convince the powers-that-be that the skilled women pilots would be of great benefit to the war effort. The ATA employed some 164 women pilots and the service delivered over 300,000 aircraft.

Judy gave examples of some of the major incidents involving the women pilots including that involving Diana Barnato Walker (the first British woman to break the sound barrier), who landed a Hawker Typhoon after it had lost the underside of the aircraft when the air intake had been ripped out. Despite the aircraft being very difficult to control and having no flaps, she successfully landed it at about 230kts. Some 25 other Typhoons had crashed killing their pilots, yet she survived, however she was chided for her actions by the Adjutant at RAF Base Kemble.

Betty Keith-Jopp was flying a Fairey Barracuda which ran into un-forecast bad weather after leaving Prestwick, Scotland. The aircraft crashed into the Firth-of-Forth, and despite her being carried towards the ocean bottom, she was able to release herself, albeit without life jacket or survival gear, only to be rescued by a passing trawler whose crew had heard her shouts for help.

Judy has provided a list of other books (below) on the subject that will attract readers' interest.

Paul Ewoldt provided an exotic array of aviation ephemera with pieces from his collection which includes magazines, brochures, stickers, badges, logos, glassware and diecast models. His acquisition of a Qantas-branded wine glass gave him the inspiration to begin a collection.

Paul said that there is always a large amount of product brochures at air shows, whilst markets can reveal rare books and pictures of aircraft. He noted that crockery on airlines often used to be made by Dalton or Wedgewood not the plastic and Styrofoam of today. Paul's collection also includes old airline material, which is in excellent condition, and features items from Ansett, TAA, East West and Airlines of NSW.

Because Paul's collection generated so much interest amongst members and visitors, it is intended to have a "collectables" evening in next year's monthly meeting program.

Ken Garland discussed the evolution of the Sport Aircraft movement from the mid 1960s to the present day. Sport aircraft make up almost half of the total number of aircraft on the CASA (VH-) register and the Recreational Aviation Australia (RA-Aus) register. Amateur built aircraft account for approximately 10% of Australia's civil aircraft registrations (not counting ultralights).

Sport aviation includes light recreational and microlight aircraft; gliders; gyroplanes; hang gliders, paragliders and powered parachutes; model aircraft; warbirds; ballooning and amateur built and experimental aircraft. These sport aviation organisations are operated under self administration, however CASA sets the Regulations and then works in close cooperation with the established organisations known as Recreational Aviation Administration Organisations (RAAOs) to make sure regulations are applied and enforced.

The RAAOs include RA-Aus, Gliding Federation of Australia, Hang Glider Federation, Australian Sport Rotorcraft Association, Model Aeronautical Association of Australia, Australian Warbirds Association, Australian Ballooning Federation and Sport Aircraft Association of Australia.

Ken described the Amateur Built Aircraft Acceptance (ABAA) process and noted that such aircraft built in this category are not "Certified" aircraft, but are treated as such for construction and maintenance purposes.

Amateur Built Experimental category was introduced in the mid-1990's and unlike ABAA aircraft, the builder has complete freedom as to how the aircraft is completed and equipped.

To find out more about RA-Aus, look at its excellent website http://old.raa.asn.au/index.html, where you will be able to find out everything about the organisation.

Thanks to Judy, Paul and Ken for their most interesting talks.

Air Transport Auxiliary

Judy Rainsford has kindly provided a number of references concerning women who served in the ATA:

The Forgotten Pilots (magnum opus by) Lettice Curtis (Foulis 1971)

Brief Glory (ATA Association, reprinted 2001) E. C. Cheeseman

Spreading My Wings Diana Barnato Walker (Patrick Stephens, 1994)

Woman Pilot Jackie Moggridge (Pan 1959)

The Sky and I Veronica Volkersz (WH Allen 1956)

Women with Wings Pauline Gower (John Long 1938)

ATA Girl Rosemary du Cros (nee Rees) (Frederick Muller 1983)

Happy to Fly Anne Welch (John Murray 1983)

Mount up with Wings Mary de Bunsen (Hutchinson 1960)

Golden Wings Alison King (Pearson 1956)

Audrey Sale-Barker's Papers archived by her nephew, James Douglas-Hamilton

The Air Battle for Malta Douglas-Hamilton (Wrens Park 2000)

Jackie Cochran published her remarkable rags-to-riches story as *The Stars at Noon* (Little Brown 1953). In 1987 she left the writing to Maryann Bucknum Brinley, whose updated version is titled, with suitable caution, *Jackie Cochran: The Greatest Woman Pilot in Aviation History* (Bantam). Ann Wood Kelly would not have disagreed, although her unpublished diaries cut through the hyperbole to which Cochran was prone.

Sisters in Arms (Pen & Sword 2006) by Helena Page Schrader, is tough on Cochran but a meticulous and useful study of the differences between the ATA and the WASP.

And great extra information for researchers:

Queen of the Skies Midge Gillies (Phoenix 2004) – definitive biography of Amy Johnson; also

Amy Johnson Constance Babington Smith (Collins 1967).

Spitfire – The Biography (Atlantic 2006)
Spitfire, Flying Legend (Osprey Aviation 1996) John Dibbs & Tony Holmes

Australian Aviation Hall of Fame

The Board of the Australian Aviation Hall of Fame and Shell Australia hosted the Inaugural Induction Ceremony on 15 September 2012 at the Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, NSW.

The inaugural inductee was *Lawrence Hargrave*, who became Australia's founding father of modern flight and opened the doors to countless other inventors and pioneers.

Other inductees were:

Mrs. Maude Rose "Lores" Bonney, who was one of the most remarkable flyers of her time, and the first woman aviator to be awarded the MBE.

Sir Norman Brearley, whose vision to develop air services in remote Western Australia led to the establishment of Western Australian Airways.

Reginald Charles Duigan and John Robertson Duigan, who designed and constructed the first Australian aircraft to fly.

Charles Maxwell "Max" Hazelton, who is the sole surviving inaugural inductee, established Hazelton Airlines, which was at one stage was the largest general aviation company in Australia.

Herbert John Louis "Bert" Hinkler, who undertook a number of record-breaking solo long distance flights, including England to Australia and New York to England via the West Indies, Brazil and West Africa.

Donald Morton Kendell, who established one of Australia's most successful regional operators – Kendell Airlines.

Sir Charles Edward Kingsford Smith, who made many record-breaking trans-oceanic, intercontinental and trans-continental flights.

Sir Ross Macpherson Smith and Sir Keith Macpherson Smith, who in 1920 completed the first flight from England to Australia.

Also at the ceremony, the Royal Flying Doctor Service was awarded the inaugural "Southern Cross Award" – honouring an organization which has made an outstanding contribution to aviation.

A Special Recognition Award was made to the Indigenous Peoples of Australia – for crafting the boomerang.

For more details, visit the Australian Aviation Hall of Fame website: www.aahof.com.au.

Plastic Fuel

Keep a look-out for the flight by Sydney pilot, Jeremy Rowsell, who will be leaving Sydney in October on a solo flight to London flying a Cessna 182 powered by aviation-quality diesel fuel made from recycled plastic.

Cynar is a company that has been running a commercial-scale operation to manufacture the fuel in Ireland for some years. By heating plastic waste to 400°C in an oxygen free environment, Cynar turns it into a gas, which is then liquefied in a distillation column. From one tonne of plastic, Cynar can produce more than 900 litres of fuel. Cynar has donated 4,000 litres of fuel for the flight, roughly what will be required to fly from Sydney to London and return. An anti-freeze will have to be added so that the fuel does not gel up, especially when flying over Europe in winter.

The flight is expected to take between 70 and 80 hours and involve up to 10 legs, roughly following the route taken by Sir Charles Kingsford Smith in 1929. In 2011, in order to raise money for the Royal Flying Doctor Service, Rowsell and Jim Hazelton flew a Beech A36 Bonanza from Oakland California to Brisbane, retracing the route flown by Kingsford Smith, Ulm, Lyons and Warner in 1928.

Penrith Electric Model Aero Club

The Penrith Electric Model Aero Club (PEMAC) whose area of land, located at Emu Heights, is identified as "HART FIELD", was reported in last month's edition of *Southern Skies* in Keith White's article entitled "The William Ewart Hart Centenary Celebrations".

The club's President is Mark Fenlon, who can be contacted on Mobile 0413532477 or landline 47312684. PEMAC was formed in 2009 and consists of approximately 100 enthusiasts who build and fly their own model aircraft fitted with electric motors. Petrol motors are not allowed due to the noise factor.

Hart Field is located in an established cleared area well into Emu Green at the end of Russell Street, Emu Plains.

The first year's membership is $216.00 per member, covering joining fee of $100.00, an annual subscription of $50.00, and $56.00 for public risk insurance, which is paid to the national body. More next month.....

New Books

Finished with Engines - the story of Qantas' long-haul flight engineers 1941-2009, by Colin Lock

This book is just about to be published and the author, Colin Lock, is seeking expressions of interest in buying the book.

The book consists of 340 indexed A4 pages and has 58 black & white photographs and diagrams. It explores the rise of the profession of Flight Engineer in Qantas through to their demise in 2009 due to technological advances. Along the way there were frequent struggles to maintain the position of the flight engineer on Qantas aircraft. In *Finished with Engines,* when discussing aircraft types on which the flight engineer formed part of the crew, the emphasis is always from a flight engineer's perspective, an aspect which is generally overlooked.

An appendix is included which consists of biographical details of the 500 or so men who performed the duties of a Qantas long-haul flight engineer over the years. Colin expects the book to be released in November this year, with the price being about $30 plus P&P. Anyone wishing to order a copy, or to find out more, can contact Colin at qffeo@yahoo.com.au (that's q as in Qantas) or at PO Box 1, Cronulla, NSW, 2230.

A Lifetime in Long Haul

By Bill Anderson

In the mid 1960s, Qantas Airways was selecting young men to train as pilots. Forty years later and

with an average of well over 20,000 flying hours around the world, thirteen Qantas pilots relate the experiences of their careers, both in the air and on the ground.

In 1965, Qantas Airways commenced the Qantas Cadet Pilot Training Scheme. Thirteen courses were completed over a period of seven years, with the last course graduating in 1972. By the late 1980's and throughout the 1990's and 2000's, a significant number of the Qantas Flight Training personnel, as well as Flight Operations Management were ex cadets.

Bill Anderson was a member of 5 Course. He and twelve colleagues from that course recall their challenges both on the ground and in the air after 'A Lifetime in Longhaul'.

These men have some amazing tales to tell, from their early days as young men learning to fly, their entry into Qantas and on to the present day. These stories contain humour and excitement, with some close calls and some very funny situations that arose during the course of those years. There are celebrities that find their way onto the flight deck and tales of cities that many will remember the way they used to be.

I confess to some personal interest here. I first met Bill Anderson in the early 1970's when he was one of several Qantas Second Officers who had recently graduated from their Cadet Course. They were keen to get some of the international flying action after having spent the preceding year flying for regional airlines or training organisations such as Bush Pilots Airways, Territory Airlines (PNG), Connellan Airways, Western Air Navigation and Illawarra Flying School. But alas, most were still Second Officers until at least the latter part of the 1970's before they moved on to the right-hand seat, and ultimately the left hand one years later. However, this prolonged time in the "back seat" or right-hand seat enabled these pilots to absorb the skills which are desirable to be a successful long-haul pilot.

The contributors to Bill's book have a wealth of experience in long haul flying and they reveal many of the issues that will be of great interest to all readers. There are 8 pages of photographs as well as several cartoons that illustrate some of the stories, and importantly a glossary of terms and an index. I commend it to anyone with an interest in aviation and particularly those who have followed the history of Qantas.

Bill has done a great job on this very readable book. It can be purchase for $30, plus postage, from Bill via his website, www.billanderson747.com or call him on 0418 770 400.

AHSA Meetings

Brisbane

Meetings are held at 7.00pm for 7.30pm on the last Friday of each month at the Royal Queensland Aero Club, Archerfield. Visitors are welcome; contact George Palmer at ahsa_qld@hotmail.com.

28 September 2012 Tony Chamberlin is an Aircraft Engineer and also a qualified pilot with low level aerobatic approvals. He is currently working for an Aircraft Engineering firm at Caloundra but previously worked for well known War-Bird collector Guido Zuccoli of Toowoomba. During his time there Tony flew the Hawker Sea Fury, Fiat G.59, Harvard and Boomerang.

Tony will talk on flying these aircraft plus operating from an engineer's perspective.

Melbourne

Meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of the month at RAAF Association, 24 Camberwell Rd, Hawthorn East, in the auditorium. Parking is available under the building – enter from the lane at the south end. The meetings start at 7.30pm - ring the bell if the front door is shut. A number of members meet casually for dinner from 6.00pm at the Tower Hotel opposite the RAAFA. Visitors welcome – contact Antony Grage on 0418 170 395.

Position Vacant

Editor – *Southern Skies*

As I will be unable to produce *Southern Skies* next year due to other commitments, the AHSA (NSW) Committee is looking for a new Editor to take over the role, with effect from the February issue. Any volunteer(s) should contact Ian Debenham or me as soon as possible to ensure a smooth handover.

Calendar of Events

29 September – 1 October 2012 Westfly – gathering of aviators and enthusiasts. York WA.

6 October 2012 Aircraft Showcase – Trainers to Fighters – Temora Aviation Museum. Temora NSW.

13-14 October 2012 Jamestown Air Show, Jamestown SA.

20 October 2012 Aircraft Showcase – North American Aviation – Temora Aviation Museum. Temora NSW.

20 October 2012 Nhill Aviation Heritage centre Fly-in. Nhill Vic.

28-29 October 2012 Queensland Vintage Aircraft Group Wings of Yesterday Fly-in. Kingaroy Qld.

3 November 2012 Aircraft Showcase – Spitfire, Tiger Moth, Hudson, A-37B - Temora Aviation Museum. Temora NSW.

3 November 2012 6th Catalina Festival Fly-in. Rathmines, on Lake Macquarie, NSW.

4 November 2012 NSW Sport Aircraft Club Open Day. Wedderburn NSW.

17 November 2012 Aircraft Showcase – Korea – Temora Aviation Museum. Temora NSW.

24-25 November 2012 HARS Engine Run Open Cockpit Days. Albion Park NSW.

1 December 2012 Aircraft Showcase – Pearl Harbour – Temora Aviation Museum. Temora NSW.

Contributions and Contacts

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

Thanks

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

LOOPS AND LANDINGS

Inspired by John Kingsford-Smith

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,... – Part 8

When the founder of KLM, Albert Plesman, was informed of the proposal to fly Miss Nancy Bird on his airline from Batavia to Amsterdam free of charge, he was entitled to ask, Miss Nancy who? A few months later he met Nancy for the first time at a pavement cafe in The Hague, and was able to assess this rather naive twenty two year old face to face. He immediately saw her potential to publicise his own company, and also to promote confidence in flying with European airlines generally, especially with women. In order to exploit this potential he saw that it would be necessary to raise her profile from that of a person famous within the borders of Australia, to that of an internationally famous British aviatrix. This promotion initially found some resistance in the United Kingdom, but was readily accepted by the Dutch, the French and, with the endorsement of Elly Beinhorn, by the Germans as well. Following Nancy's return to Berlin from her visit to the aviation exhibition at the Grand Palais in Paris, which ended on December 11, 1938, it was time to prepare to leave Germany and embark on her planned visit to Scandinavia.

The planning for Nancy's Scandinavian visit was again greatly assisted by Albert Plesman and KLM. Free passage to Stockholm was provided by KLM. With her experience of mixing with people at the very top of civil aviation in Germany, it was incumbent on the Scandinavians to provide similar access for her in Scandinavia. Plesman's influence was apparent in the offer by Carl Florman, the founder of Sweden's major airline, Aktiebolaget Aerotransport, (A.B.A.), to be her host. Sweden's most famous aviator, Kurt Bjorkvall, was engaged to be her personal pilot, and Count Folke Bernadotte, who was a member of the Swedish royal family, accepted the responsibility of making her welcome in Sweden. But first there was the sad separation from Stewart Herman to endure. Nancy wrote: "I left Berlin in 1938 with a heavy heart and shed a few tears as I flew away." KLM flew her from Berlin to Schiphol in Amsterdam. On arrival there the weather closed in with snow and fog halting all aircraft movements. She was stranded for three days in Amsterdam before her journey could resume.

While Nancy waited in Amsterdam she received a telegram from the Royal Swedish Aero Club promising her a warm welcome. Then at last her KLM DC3 was able to take off, even though visibility had improved to only a few hundred yards. She wrote: "Never will I forget the thrill of flying over miles of snow-clad country and a frozen sea. I watched ice form on the wings and windows, and heard it hit the airliner when the de-icers cracked it, and the slipstream flung it back." Count Bernadotte formally welcomed her to Sweden and then she became the guest of Carl Florman to experience her first white Christmas. Having been informed of Nancy's service in Australia's outback, sometimes operating as an air ambulance, Count Bernadotte arranged for her to meet Baron Stjernstedt and General Bauer of the Swedish Red Cross to show her how air ambulances operated in Sweden's outback. This required the use of aircraft equipped with floats or skis. As a practical demonstration, Kurt Bjorkvall flew Nancy in his ski equipped Waco cabin biplane, from Stockholm to Are, a popular ski resort 328 miles to the north, landing on a frozen lake on arrival. Photographs of Nancy and Kurt show the Waco in the background registered SE-AHM and named *Imbrim*. Kurt was rescued off the Irish coast by a French trawler named *Imbrim* on October 6, 1936, after a failed New York-Stockholm attempt in a Bellanca CH-400W Pacemaker. Another reason for flying to Are was that Carl Florman had a holiday cottage there, and Nancy was invited to spent a few days skiing and skating before catching a sleeper train back to Stockholm. On the train Nancy found that she was recognised by nearly all her fellow travellers.

On Monday January 9, A.B.A. flew Nancy from Stockholm to Helsinki. There was a landing at Abo enroute at which she faced a group of reporters. There was a similar reception by the press when she arrived at Helsinki. On the following day she met with the Finnish Minister of Transport and the Controller of Civil Aviation. She was briefed on the layout of Finnish aerodromes, projected airline routes, and the air ambulance network. The President of the Finnish Aero Club was her host at lunch, and she was the guest of Australia's honorary consular representative at dinner. She returned to Stockholm by A.B.A. DC3 to say farewell to her Swedish hosts. For Carl Florman, the publicity

generated by Nancy's association with his airline was so successful that he invited her to return to Stockholm later in the year to promote an extension of the A.B.A. network to Moscow. Her next destination was Copenhagen where she was met by representatives of A.B.A. and Det Danske Luftfartselskab, (D.D.L.), as well as members of the press. She was shown over the recently completed airport buildings before being taken to her hotel where she received a presentation of flowers at a reception by the Royal Danish Aero Club. On Friday, January 13, after early morning sight seeing in Copenhagen, she boarded her Swedish DC3 for Amsterdam, where she arrived at 2 pm.

Nancy was met at Schiphol by Dr Slotboom, KLM's medical officer, who drove her to her hotel at The Hague. The following day she attended a meeting with KLM's executive director, Hans Martin, to review her experiences since their first meeting at her Amsterdam press conference, soon after she arrived from Australia in August,1938. Since that meeting Hans Martin himself had travelled by KLM/KNILM to Australia and back. His reason for the trip was to talk to Australian politicians and civil aviation administrators about KLM's future plans. He was negotiating with the Douglas Aircraft Co for the supply of DC4 airliners in 1941 with which he planned to reduce the Amsterdam-Batavia travel time to two and a half days. The new route would be Amsterdam-Basra-Colombo-Batavia. He was seeking permission to extend the service to Australia, via Wyndham, bringing Sydney within three and a half days of Europe. Hans confided to Nancy his disappointment with his reception in Canberra. The strong influence of the directors of Imperial Airways Ltd, who were averse to any competition with their flying boat service, was apparent. The Australians, he said, lacked imagination. However, he was pleased with Nancy's support for KLM and suggested she write a book about her air travels.

Nancy arrived in London on January 16, aboard an A.B.A. airliner. The next morning she was in contact with Group Captain Frank McNamara and the agent-general for New South Wales, Clifford Hay. Her original objective to learn all she could about the operation of civil airlines had not changed, but she had now set herself the additional task of collecting material for her planned exhibition, *Wings the World Over*. In Europe and Scandinavia she saw the benefits of being accepted as a celebrity. Doors to people at the top were more easily opened for her. She knew that in the U.K., and later in the U.S.A., she would need to elevate her profile to a similar level if she was to continue with her extraordinary access to leaders in government and the aviation industry. After contacting Australia House, Nancy lunched with the Royal Aeronautical Society's Florence Barwood, who earlier had been so helpful with publicity and letter typing. As a result of these initiatives Nancy was a guest on the BBC's popular weekly radio programme, *In Town Tonight*, which was broadcast on Saturday evening, January 21. Everyone now knew that Miss Nancy Bird was back in town. When it was later reported that she was to be presented at their Majesties' Court, she was placed on London high society's 'A' List of invitees to the cocktail circuit. Sensing the publicity value for his fashion house, the famous designer, Edward Molyneux, offered to provide her with a gown for the Buckingham Palace exposure.

From the time Alex Henshaw and his father first met Nancy in London in the autumn of 1938, a warm friendship developed. On January 27, 1939, Nancy received a letter from Alex informing her that he was about to challenge the England - Cape Town - England record in his Percival Mew Gull G-AEXF. Alex took off from Gravesend at 3.35am on February 5, landing back there, in an exhausted state, at 1.51pm on February 9, having broken all previous records. Two days later, he had recovered sufficiently from his physical ordeal to be a guest on *In Town Tonight*. Nancy was present at the broadcast and afterwards joined Alex and his father at dinner. Alex too, had now become a celebrity. He relates the immediate effects of this status in *The Flight of the Mew Gull*: "I would be a hypocrite if I said the world in which I found myself did not excite fascinate and flatter me: offer of a suite in one of London's best hotels; broadcasts, television interviews, luncheons, dinners, lectures, first nights and sporting events all over the country." Nancy may have had some advice for Alex about the downside of publicity. She was at the time having difficulty with her visa for her planned A.B.A. flight to Moscow. In *My God It's A Woman!* she wrote: "The Russians thought I was Swedish and were horrified to hear that I was an Australian aviatrix. American Charles Lindbergh had recently been their guest and had made some uncomplimentary comments about the Russians whilst in Germany, so they were suspicious of flying people. The Swedes had to accept responsibility for me!".....**John Scott.**

AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA (NSW) Inc

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Southern Skies

The Newsletter of AHSA (NSW) Inc

November 2012 No.467

November Meeting

Arthur Butler Memorial Lecture

The November meeting will be held at the Powerhouse Museum on Wednesday 7th November 2012, at 7.45pm. The venue will be the Amenities Room, at the southern end of the Administration building. Entry is via Macarthur Street and car parking is immediately in front of the meeting room. Visitors are most welcome and supper will be available after the meeting.

The meeting will feature the 30th Annual Arthur Butler Memorial Lecture with guest speaker Bob De La Hunty OAM, President of the Historical Aircraft Restoration Society (HARS). His topic will be:

HARS: Its Successes and its Future

Bob De La Hunty comes from a corporate background as a Certified Financial Planner with a Diploma of Financial Planning, operating his own financial planning business until he retired in 2007.

He is on the board of numerous companies including the Aerospace Foundation of Australia Limited, The Maritime and Defence Foundation of Australia Limited and the Temora Aviation Museum. Bob is also a Fellow of the Australian Institute of History & Arts.

As President of HARS he presides over the overall operation of the Society. He ensures that the Society is continually focused in accordance with its mission statement. Bob is responsible for the sub-committees that control the day to day activities of the Society. These committees directly supervise the active projects and the maintenance of all the Society's aircraft. He is also directly involved in the selection of new projects that are referred to the Society.

Bob, in conjunction with the other Executive Committee Members, involves himself in the promotion of the Society at all levels. He is also the Society's Chief Pilot and the endorsing pilot for both the Super Constellation and Neptune aircraft.

In the Queen's Birthday 2000 Honours Lists Bob received an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in recognition of his services to Aviation and Australian Aviation heritage specifically mentioning the Historical Aircraft Restoration Society.

Members are kindly requested to bring a plate of finger food for the supper after this highlight event of our meetings calendar.

Committee Meeting

A Committee meeting, commencing at 6.15pm, will be held immediately prior to the November meeting.

October Meeting

Guest speaker was Dr Gordon Pike whose topic was "PK-AFV and the Broome Air Raid on March 3, 1942." The title really understated the subject, because Dr Pike's comprehensive talk covered so much more about the raids, the people, the aircraft and their fates rather than just the demise of the DC-3.

Gordon compared the township of Broome in the 1940s with that of today. It was a sleepy haven some 2,000km north of Perth and the centre of the pearling industry. In 1942, it was, however, a convenient refueling point for those aircraft carrying thousands of Dutch nationals escaping the Japanese invasion of the Dutch East Indies. The airport had an east-west runway and a north-south runway adjoining at a T-intersection. Today only the east-west runway survives. However, Broome also hosted an ideal seaplane facility at Roebuck Bay.

On the waters of Roebuck Bay on 3 March 1942 were five Dornier Do.24, four RNAF Catalinas, two US Navy Catalinas, 2 RAF Catalinas, 2 Short C Class flying boats and a Curtiss SOC Seagull. At 9.30am, nine Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service Mitsubishi Zeros attacked Broome, and in particular, Roebuck Bay. It had been assumed that Broome would be immune from attack because no Japanese aircraft had the range to reach such a target; but the use of drop-tanks by the Japanese resolved that problem.

The crew of the Curtiss Seagull was able to get airborne in order to escape the attack and were pursued by a Zero flown by W/O Osamu Kudo. Fortunately for the Seagull crew, the Zero was distracted by richer pickings – a USAAF B-24 Liberator had just taken off from Broome Airport bound for Perth carrying war wounded personnel for repatriation. The Zero attacked and destroyed the Liberator, and all 31 persons on board were killed.

At Broome Airport, Dutch Flight Lieutenant "Gus" Winckel used a machine gun from his Lockheed Lodestar to shoot down the Zero piloted by Osamu Kudo.

About 100 people died in the attacks on Broome that day; yet none were Australian. The majority were Dutch nationals, with some American and some British.

Another six aircraft were destroyed at Broome Airport: two USAAC B-17s and another B-24; one RAAF Lockheed Hudson, one Dutch East Indies Navy Lodestar and a DC-3 in addition to the Liberator off Cable Beach.

A KNILM DC-3 PK-AFV "Pelikaan" had taken off from Bandung, Java several hours earlier and was en-route to Broome when the attack was carried out. Three Zeros returning to base spotted the DC-3, attacked it, causing the Captain, Ivan "Turc" Smirnoff, to make a forced landing

on a beach at Carnot Bat about 80km north of Broome. One engine was on fire and Captain Smirnoff landed on the beach into the waves to douse the flames. Of the 15 persons on board Mrs van Tuyn (wife of the Lodestar pilot in Broome) and her infant son, a mechanic and a Dutch pilot travelling as a passenger, died as a result of the crash. Smirnoff dispatched two men to seek water, albeit returning unsuccessfully. He later sent two groups of men to get to Broome seeking rescue. Meantime, an aboriginal man observed the dog-fight and crash of the DC-3 and reported it to the nearby Beagle Bay Mission. The survivors were eventually rescued and taken to Broome.

Prior to departure from Bandung, Captain Smirnoff was given a package of something valuable to be handed to Australian bank officials on arrival at Broome. During the evacuation at Carnot Bay, the container was dropped into the surf and forgotten. Several weeks later, a Broome "beachcomber" Jack Palmer, and two acquaintances were sailing north and found the deserted aircraft. During the search of the aircraft they found the packages, which contained diamonds, that had been valued at an estimated £150,000 – £300,000; over $30,000,000 in today's money. Not knowing the value of the gems, Palmer shared some of the diamonds with his friends and aboriginal people. But Palmer also decided to enlist, and during the enlistment process, revealed the package of diamonds to the Recruitment Officer.

Palmer and his friends were later charged and tried for the theft of the diamonds, but were acquitted. Only about half of the diamonds were recovered, however Palmer was reported to have lived a very comfortable life until his death.

On 3 March 2012, the Dutch Embassy hosted a commemoration ceremony that was held at Bedford Park Allied War Memorial in Broome to remember those who were killed and wounded in the Broome attacks.

Gordon's most enlightening talk was accompanied by many images of the events of 3 March 1942, the aircraft, the people and several interviews of those involved.

Gordon has kindly supplied several references that will be of interest to our members:

- *The Diamond Dakota Mystery*, by Julliet Wills
- *Flight of Diamonds*, by W.H. Tyler
- *The Fourth Ally – the Dutch Forces in Australia in World War II*, by Doug Hurst
- *Red Sun on the Kangaroo Paw – Japanese Air Raids and Attacks on Western Australia in World War II*, by Kevin Gomm.

First Flights

New Zealand aviation enjoyed a boost on two recent occasions with the first flights after extensive restoration of an Avro Anson followed by a de Havilland Mosquito.

The Avro Anson Mk 1 flew at Nelson on 18 July 2012 and has since appeared at several air shows in New Zealand. Now registered as ZK-RRA (marked as K6183), this aircraft was the former VH-BAF, which was the Anson used as the Australian prototype fitted with metal wings. During the conversion, it was also fitted with Avro XIX style windows. It had been operated by Brain and Brown Airfreighters and later Terry Brain before going to the Wangaratta Air Museum. It was sold in 2002 to New Zealand, and during its restoration, the glass-house style windows were restored.

The other eagerly awaited first flight was that of the de Havilland Mosquito F.B Mk26, which first flew at Ardmore, near Auckland, on 27 September 2012. The 45 minute flight departed Auckland's Ardmore Airport and landed at Auckland International. It carried out further test flights the following day and made its first public appearance at the air show at Ardmore one day later. The aircraft has been registered as ZK-MOS although the owner, Jerry Yagen of the Military Aviation Museum, Virginia Beach, Virginia USA intends to bring the aircraft back to the USA.

The aircraft was originally built in Canada in 1945 for the Royal Canadian Air Force, however it went into storage without ever seeing combat. The restoration, which has been undertaken by AvSpecs at Ardmore, has taken some 8 years to complete.

Vale

Lady Joyce (Joy) Taylor

Lady Joy Taylor, who was the wife of the late Sir Patrick Gordon Taylor, Mother of Gai, Alan and Sarah, died on 4 October 2012. She was 83 years old.

Formerly a schoolteacher, she married the then Patrick Gordon (Bill) Taylor after he returned from his 1951 journey from Australia to Chile and return. Sir Gordon died in 1966, and it was Lady Joy who attended the special ceremony at the Powerhouse Museum when Sir Gordon's restored Catalina VH-ASA *Frigate Bird II* was hoisted to its centrepiece position in the Boiler Hall at the museum.

Aircraft Disposals

The Minister for Defence Materiel, Jason Clare has announced the distribution of ex-RAAF aircraft to a number of museum and establishments around the country.

On 2 October 2012, he announced the preferred recipients of six Iroquois helicopters reserved for RSLs and historical organizations.

"The Iroquois helicopters served in the Australian Defence Force for nearly half a century. They were affectionately known as Hueys, and featured prominently in the battle of Long Tan," Mr Clare said.

"During the Vietnam War, the helicopters provided vital support to troops on the ground. They were used for casualty evacuations, patrols and resupply. Today's announcement means they will be preserved to ensure their contribution to our military heritage is not forgotten."

The six successful organizations are:

- Australian Flying Corps RAAF Association West Australia Division;
- Vietnam Veterans Associations of Australia Mitchell Sub-branch Victoria;
- Caboolture Warplane and Flight Heritage Museum Queensland;
- Port Pirie RSL Sub-branch South Australia;
- Merredin Military Museum West Australia; and
- Scottsdale RSL Sub-branch Tasmania.

Following their service in Vietnam, the Iroquois went on to serve on many peacekeeping and humanitarian missions.

Iroquois helicopters were withdrawn from service in December 2007. Defence will now commence negotiations with the preferred recipients. The helicopters will need to be demilitarised, and the display is subject to approval by United States Government under its International Traffic in Arms Regulations.

On 4 October Mr. Clare announced the preferred recipients for six retired F-111C aircraft to be loaned to aircraft museums and historical organizations across Australia.

"The iconic F-111s were the front line of the Australian Defence Force for almost four decades," Minister Clare said.

"Loaning these mighty planes to Australian air museums and historical organizations will help preserve this important part of our military heritage."

The successful organizations are:

- Aviation Historical Society of the Northern Territory (Winnellie NT);
- Evans Head Memorial Aerodrome Heritage Aviation Association (Evans Head NSW);
- Fighter World (Williamtown NSW);
- Historical Aircraft Restoration Society (Albion Park Rail NSW);
- Queensland Air Museum (Caloundra QLD); and
- South Australian Aviation Museum (Port Adelaide SA).

The Australian Flying Corps and Royal Australian Air Force Association - WA Division Inc (Bull Creek WA) will receive a crew module display. F-111 aircraft are already on display at RAAF Base Amberley, Queensland and at the RAAF Museum, RAAF Base Point Cook in Victoria.

Two F-111 aircraft, which are also at RAAF Base Edinburgh and RAAF Base Wagga Wagga, will also be put on display. The aircraft loaned to aircraft museums and historical organizations are expected to be delivered from early 2013.

The RAAF retired the F-111 in 2010 after 37 years of service, with a flypast of Ipswich, Brisbane, and the Gold and Sunshine Coasts by six F-111s accompanied by four F/A-18Fs, and a final F-111 display overhead RAAF Amberley.

The F-111 was replaced by the current squadrons of F/A-18F Super Hornets. The aircraft museums and historical organizations must comply with a number of conditions to ensure the safety of the aircraft.

Something for the Enthusiasts

ABC News in Alice Springs reported on 19 September that an aircraft graveyard is being constructed in Central Australia.

Asia Pacific Aircraft Storage started construction on Monday 17 September at a 100-hectare site next to the Alice Springs Airport.

The company's Tom Vincent says civil works should be completed by the end of the year. He says the aircraft storage area is attracting interest from Asian airlines, as well as enthusiastic plane spotters.

"There's a large segment of the community of aviation fanatics," he said. "I'm one myself. I'm a pilot. I think people would come from all around the place to take a look [at it]. It's [an] unusual piece of infrastructure. The principle storage facilities are based in the US and they certainly attract a large number of people who come and look at aircraft."

Mr Vincent says the site will accommodate up to 300 aircraft. "We're designing various stages as we go through," he said. "Right now we're doing the main tow road which connects to the runway for the first finger of storage bays to the south, the de-fuel pad and the dismantling pad and we'll progressively then add in the other elements of the facility, the second and third storage bays and maintenance shed."

New Books

Finished with Engines - the story of Qantas' long-haul flight engineers 1941-2009, by Colin Lock

Colin Lock is still seeking expressions of interest in buying the book that was discussed in last month's newsletter.

Colin expects the book to be released in November this year, with the price being about $30 plus P&P. Anyone wishing to order a copy, or to find out more, can contact Colin at qffeo@yahoo.com.au (that's q as in Qantas) or at PO Box 1, Cronulla, NSW, 2230.

Unknown Warrior – The Search for Australia's Greatest Ace, by Mike Rosel.

Mike Rosel was the guest speaker at an AHSA Inc meeting in Melbourne earlier this year. Mike's book is published by Australian Scholarly Publishing, and was launched at Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance on 18 September this year.

From Australian Scholarly Publishing's website:

"'Lest We Forget' - that mantra of military remembrance - failed for Captain Alec Little, Australia's greatest fighter Ace.

Despite the recent outpouring in interest in our military heritage, the young Victorian credited with 47 victories is virtually unknown to ordinary Australians. He was only 22 when he died in his Sopwith Camel in a solo night pursuit of German bombers above the Western Front on 27 May 1918.

Little combined nerve and aggression in his preferred close-quarter combat, a compulsion for the lone hunt, lethal marksmanship, superb eyesight and reckless bravery in pushing his aircraft to the limit. The qualities which made him a consummate combat pilot were reinforced by astonishing luck over three years of training and combat which earned Alec Little a DSO and Bar, DSC and Bar and Croix de Guerre, but only fleeting fame. His achievements received significant official commemoration and the enduring recognition of military aviation historians and enthusiasts.

So how did he go missing from History's Page? Melbourne writer Mike Rosel, intrigued by coming across Little's first fighter at the RAF Museum, has recreated his motivations and meteoric life and death in the context of the long-gone Anglo-Australian culture. Mike Rosel has resurrected Little through his logbooks, fellow pilots'

reminiscences, research in France, Britain and Australia, and the documents and tales of descendants and his old school.

This first biography on Little is also a 'fair go' plea for better recognition for the thousands of Australians who fought the same enemy, but in Allied uniforms."

The Rex Story – The First Ten Years

Rex Airlines has released a 10th Anniversary commemorative coffee table book '*The Rex Story – The First Ten Years*'. It traces Rex's history from its very origins in Hazelton Airlines and Kendell Airlines to its inception after the Ansett collapse, through to its acquisition of subsidiaries Pel-Air, Air Link and AAPA.

All sale proceeds go to two local Wagga Wagga charities, Country Hope and Can Assist. The book is available in hard cover for $50.00 or soft cover at $40.00. Order on-line at:

https://www.regionalexpress.com/rexcollection/collection0.aspx

Spitfire Update

From the Sydney Morning Herald 19 October 2012.

Burma's government has signed an agreement with a British farmer to allow the excavation of dozens of rare Spitfires buried in the country at the end of World War II.

The deal was made possible by the intervention of the British Prime Minister, David Cameron, who discussed bringing the planes home when he met the Burmese President, Thein Sein, in April. David Cundall, a farmer and aviation enthusiast, struck the historical equivalent of a gold mine when he found the planes in February, almost 70 years after they were carefully greased and wrapped to preserve them, before being buried in crates. Work on digging up the planes will start at the end of this month.

The find is considered even more valuable because the Spitfires are rare Mark XIV fighters, equipped with the Rolls-Royce Griffon engine.

Mr Cundall, 62, spent 16 years and more than £130,000 of his own money scouring former RAF airfields in Burma for the planes, after receiving a tip-off that they were buried at the end of a runway in August 1945.

Mr Cameron made retrieving the planes a priority when he travelled to Rangoon in April to meet Mr Thein Sein and Aung San Suu Kyi. But the deal was delayed after a tussle between Mr Cundall and the British businessman Steve Boultbee Brooks over who had the right to extract the planes. Most of the Spitfires are expected to be returned to Britain, with some remaining in Burma on display.

AHSA Meetings

Brisbane

Meetings are held at 7.00pm for 7.30pm on the last Friday of each month at the Royal Queensland Aero Club, Archerfield. Visitors are welcome; contact George Palmer at ahsa_qld@hotmail.com.

Melbourne

Meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of the month at RAAF Association, 24 Camberwell Rd, Hawthorn East, in the auditorium. Parking is available under the building – enter from the lane at the south end. The meetings start at 7.30pm - ring the bell if the front door is shut. Visitors welcome – contact Antony Grage on 0418 170 395.

Position Vacant

Editor – *Southern Skies*

No volunteers to take over the position of Editor of *Southern Skies* have yet been forthcoming. The AHSA (NSW) Committee is anxiously looking for a new Editor to take over the role, with effect from the February issue. Any volunteer(s) should contact Ian Debenham or me as soon as possible to ensure a smooth handover.

2013 Subscriptions

The Committee has determined that the subscription rates for AHSA (NSW) Inc for 2013 will remain at $25.00 per annum.

We have received advice from AHSA Inc, publisher of *Aviation Heritage*, that its subscription rates for 2013 will be $65 per annum. It has not yet been confirmed what discount that joint members of both organizations will receive.

The December issue of *Southern Skies* will be accompanied by the 2013 Subscription Renewal form, which will include the joint membership details, should that offer be continued. If advice from AHSA Inc is not forthcoming, then members will be invited to remain members of AHSA (NSW) Inc and deal directly with AHSA Inc when its subscriptions fall due.

Calendar of Events

3 November 2012 Aircraft Showcase – Spitfire, Tiger Moth, Hudson, A-37B - Temora Aviation Museum. Temora NSW.

3 November 2012 6th Catalina Festival Fly-in. Rathmines, on Lake Macquarie, NSW.

3 November 2012 Toowoomba Airport Open Day – celebrating 100 years of aviation at Toowoomba, Qld.

4 November 2012 NSW Sport Aircraft Club Open Day. Wedderburn NSW.

17 November 2012 Aircraft Showcase – Korea – Temora Aviation Museum. Temora NSW

18 November 2012 Caboolture Warplane Museum Antique Aircraft Open Day. Caboolture Qld.

24-25 November 2012 HARS Engine Run Open Cockpit Days. Albion Park NSW.

1 December 2012 Aircraft Showcase – Pearl Harbour – Temora Aviation Museum. Temora NSW.

4-6 January 2013 The Great Eastern Fly-In. Evans Head NSW

Contributions and Contacts

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

Thanks

Thanks to Peter Coates, Roger McDonald and John Scott for their contributions to this newsletter.

LOOPS AND LANDINGS

Inspired by John Kingsford-Smith

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,... – Part 9

In the late afternoon on Valentine's Day, 1939, Alex Henshaw called on Nancy Bird at her Queensborough Terrace pension, and drove her out of London to the home of his good friend Arthur Clouston. In her autobiography Nancy recalled: "Alex invited me to visit Arthur Clouston whose England - South Africa record Alex had broken. Clouston was ill in bed, but what an evening I had listening to these two magnificent record breakers recount their flights hour by hour." No doubt Alex and Arthur also talked about the most recent record breaking flight of the famous DH 88 Comet racer, G-ACSS. Frank Packer, through his company, *Australian Consolidated Press*, planned to contribute to Australia's Sesquicentenary Celebrations. The idea of contrasting the time taken for the First Fleet to travel from England to Sydney, (eight months), with the time it would take for a modern air age record breaking flight, to travel between the same locations, was irresistible. Having achieved the record for the Cape Town flight in G-ACSS, Clouston was approached by ACP's representative in London to attempt to set a new record from England to Sydney, and to take with him a journalist, Victor Ricketts, to report on the journey. The Comet racer was named *Australian Anniversary* for the attempt. Clouston and Ricketts took off from Gravesend on February 6, 1938, but the record attempt ended on Cyprus with the Comet badly damaged in a landing accident. In a dramatic rescue flight, Alex Henshaw with Clouston's mechanic, Jack Cross, and two others on board, flew out to Cyprus in a hired Vega Gull. *Australian Anniversary* was repaired sufficiently for it to limp back to England. The second attempt to reach Sydney departed on March 15 and was a headline making success. Clouston was not the owner of G-ACSS and had not been able to reach an agreement, before leaving England, to continue the flight from Sydney to his mother and siblings in New Zealand. A late night conference with Frank Packer at the Hotel Australia in Sydney solved the impasse, with ACP extending funding and insurance for the flight to Omaka and return. The England - New Zealand - England flight was not only something of a fairy tale for Arthur Clouston, it was considered more widely as the most notable of G-ACSS's considerable achievements.

Nancy was now little more than half way through her planned one year absence from Australia. The opportunities she had been given to meet the administrators of civil aviation in the U.K. and Europe, and to experience the operation of their airlines, had been extraordinary. Back in London, her exhausting schedule was made more hectic by the additional time required to fulfil the obligations of her over full social calendar. For example she was on the VIP list for the London preview of Edmund Goulding's remake of *Dawn Patrol* starring Errol Flynn. At the Warner Theatre on February 16, according to a newspaper report, Nancy rubbed shoulders with: "Members of the Cabinet, officials of the Air Ministry, heads of civil aviation and aviators of international repute." The list of attendees included Sir Alan and Lady Cobham, Claude Grahame-White, F. G. Miles, Captain E. W. Percival, James Mollison and Captain G. de Havilland. Nancy's meeting with Geoffrey de Havilland may explain her appearance at the de Havilland Ball on the evening of Saturday, February 27, which found her dancing all night and consuming kippers at a Lyons restaurant at 5 am on the Sunday morning. Later that day she was a guest of Herbert and Frida Brackley for supper at their Knightsbridge flat. Herbert was the Air Superintendent for *Imperial Airways*, and if Nancy had looked through the Brackley's visitor's book she would have seen that Hudson Fysh had been their guest for Christmas dinner, 1938. Nancy also accepted invitations which required considerable preparation on her part, such as speaking to women's groups at The Forum Cub and to members of the British branch of the *International Federation of Business and Professional Women* at The Overseas Club. Not bad for a young woman who had only recently come in from the Australian outback.

Nancy's luncheon and cocktail meetings brought her in touch with people of considerable influence in the aviation community. Among those she met were; Charles G. Grey, (Editor of Aeroplane magazine); Harold Perrin, (Secretary of The Royal Aero Club); Sidney Dismore, (Assistant General Manager of Imperial Airways); Lord Wakefield, (Founder of the Castrol Oil Company and

benefactor of Alan Cobham, Amy Johnson, Jean Batten, Charles Ulm and others); Air Vice Marshall Richard Williams, (RAAF), and the list goes on. But there was a series of meetings that almost certainly brought Nancy, quite innocently, to the attention of MI5. Nancy's time in Germany as a high profile guest of Lufthansa and the German Government would have been noted by the security service in England. At the time, Charles G. Grey had strong fascist leanings, was an ardent supporter of Adolf Hitler, and would have been under intelligence surveillance. Nancy had several meetings with C. G. Grey before going off to meet the Secretary of *The Anglo- German Fellowship*, an organisation set up in 1935 to promote a better understanding of Germany, but which, by 1939, had been infiltrated by spies like Guy Burgess and Kim Philby. She was again with C. G. Grey on March 28, at The Forum Club, when she met the German Air Attaché. Was it time to debrief Miss Nancy Bird? On April 10, a meeting was arranged for Nancy with MI6 operative Sidney Cotton at his private hangar on Heston Airport. Nancy of course knew nothing of Cotton's espionage activities and was impressed by the new Lockheed 12A, (G-AFKR), which she thought he privately owned. Sidney invited Nancy to join him for cocktails at his home in a few days time, after he got back from what he told her was to be a holiday flight to Africa and back. In reality, Mussolini had invaded Albania only three days earlier, and Sidney was off on a secret mission to photograph Italian military installations in the Mediterranean. Was Sidney Cotton instructed by MI6 to assess whether Nancy had any information from her experiences in Germany that might be of value to British intelligence? If any such assessment was made, it was apparently without her knowledge.

Time was passing, and Nancy's troubles with her visa to Russia continued. She had hoped to be on board D.D.L.'s inaugural flight to Moscow and to be in Russia on May Day to witness the annual parade in Red Square. It now seemed that the earliest she would be permitted entry was May 5. However,she still kept to her original plan of setting off for Stockholm on Wednesday, April 26. This was why Stewart Herman was in London over the weekend of April 22/23. On the Monday evening, their last night together, Nancy and Stewart were at the Queen's Theatre to see the play *Dear Octopus*, starring Marie Tempest and John Gielgud. The following morning the couple said their last farewells at Victoria Station, where Stewart caught the train on his way back to Berlin. The next day it was time for Nancy to leave London. Her flight was a morning KLM service from Croydon to Rotterdam. Again she was met at the airport and driven to The Hague for a meeting with Hans Martin. Had Nancy heard anything about the proposed KLM extension from Batavia to Australia from her Imperial Airways contacts? Hans confided that no permission had yet come from the Australian Government. Nancy departed Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport on Thursday morning at 6.40 am onboard a D.D.L. Junkers Ju52, flying via Hamburg, Copenhagen and Malmo to Stockholm. A welcoming party, headed by a D.D.L. associate, Marcus Wallenberg Jr., and a press contingent, was on hand to meet her.

Because of the time taken to resolve Nancy's Russian visa problem, her departure for Moscow was delayed until May 3. In the meantime D.D.L.'s executives, Carl Florman and Per Norlin, welcomed her back to Stockholm like an old friend. She called on Sir Edmund Monson, the British Ambassador to Sweden, and soon had a full programme of engagements. A typical day was being called on by a Polish Count to join Countess Olga Cronstedt's party, which included Sir Edmund Monson and his wife, Lady Mary Walker and the Dutch Consul, for a lakeside picnic among the pines consisting of sandwiches, beer and champagne, followed by a leisurely stroll in the mountains before retiring to the International Club for dinner. On May Day, celebrated by Scandinavian university students as *White Cap Day*, Nancy was the guest of the Swedish Air Force. She was driven to Vas to see a gliding demonstration, and then taken on a scenic tour of castles and ancient burial grounds. It must have been difficult for her to break away from this idyll to board a D.D.L. DC3 to fly off to Moscow with its more Spartan lifestyle. She need not have worried. The Swedes had arranged for representatives of Aeroflot to meet her, and to be introduced to the famous trio, *Stalin's Female Eagles* . They were Valentina Grizodubova, (Commander), Polina Osipenko, (Co-pilot), and Marina Raskova, (Navigator). On September 24/25, 1938, they set a world distance record for women, 3486 miles from Moscow flying east to Komsomd'ska-na-Amure in the Sukhoi designed ANT-37 *Rodina*. One week after meeting Nancy, Polina died with test pilot Anatolii Serov when their aeroplane crashed..**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

December 2012 No.468

December Meeting

The December meeting will be held at the Qantas Heritage Centre, Terminal 3 (Qantas Domestic Terminal), Sydney (Kingsford Smith) Airport on Wednesday 5th December 2012, at 7.45pm. The venue entrance is on the first floor (Departures Level) at the western end.

Because of the exorbitant parking fees at the airport, our host, David Crotty (who is the Curator of the Qantas Heritage Collection) has kindly arranged bus transport from the Qantas Centre Building C, opposite the Holiday Inn on Bourke Road, Mascot. Arrangements have been made with the drivers for AHSA members to use the bus service, which departs at 20 minute intervals.

AHSA members can use the Qantas visitors' car park off Bourke Rd behind Building C as there should be plenty of space at this time. Guests will need to allow time to park and catch the bus and then go through security at Terminal 3; therefore, they should aim to be at the entrance to Building C by 7.00pm.

Alternatively, members can travel by train to Mascot Station (no additional gate fee is payable as per Domestic and International Terminal stations) and make the 5 minute walk along Bourke Road and across Coward Street to the Qantas Centre.

Visitors are most welcome and supper will be available after the meeting. Members and visitors should also be aware that they will be subject to normal security checks prior to entering the departures area of Terminal 3. Any sharp objects, knives, scissors or the like are not permitted in the area and will be confiscated by Security.

The theme of the meeting is the 75th anniversary of the establishment of flying boat services between Australia and London. On December 21, 1937 the Imperial Airways Short "C" Class flying boat G-ADUT *Centaurus* touched down on the Brisbane River and three days later at Rose Bay on its survey of the route. Scheduled flying boat services began in 1938. A plaque at the Maritime Museum, South Brisbane commemorates the aircraft's arrival in 1937.

During the meeting, David Crotty will conduct a guided tour of the collection; speak on the Short "C" Class Flying Boat; and present a short film on the take-off accident involving the Pan Am Boeing 707 at Sydney Airport in 1969.

Please join us for the final meeting of 2012.

November Meeting

The November meeting featured the 30th Annual Arthur Butler Memorial Lecture with guest speaker Bob De La Hunty OAM, President of the Historical Aircraft Restoration Society (HARS), who spoke on *HARS: Its Successes and its Future.*

Bob introduced his lecture with reference to the vision and perseverance of Arthur Butler, and lamented the demise of many of the rural air routes fostered by Butler Air Transport. He noted that his own aviation career, and that of colleague Captain Ross Kelly, had been developed in rural NSW often visiting airports once serviced by Butler Air Transport. A fitting background image of a Butler Air Transport Convair 340 accompanied Bob's introduction.

Bob detailed the structure of HARS and provided some interesting detail about the organization. It has no employees – but many volunteers – not only aircrew and engineers but also other support staff. It actively supports other organizations such as Air Force Cadets, Australian Air League, and encourages visits by children's and school groups and by disabled persons. It is responsible for some 40 aircraft and has 11,000 sq.m in hangar space. Another two hangars are to be constructed.

For each aircraft type, there is a Project Manager, a Project Engineer and a support team. But the challenge for the organization is, not surprisingly, fund raising and sponsorship.

Bob recalled the early days of the organization, with some dreams in 1978 and the acquisition of the first aircraft, a North American T-6 Texan.

The group of early "dreamers" included Rob Greinert, Denis Baxter, Gordon Glynn and of course, Bob himself. An early acquisition was 8 R3350 engines from former motor racing driver, Arnold Glass, and later a Lockheed Neptune owned by former RAAF pilot, Peter Rundle. During the test flight at Townsville prior to the purchase, the port engine let out a huge bang, and on inspection of the 72 spark plugs after the flight, they found all were corroded. HARS also acquired an ex- Aeronavale Neptune from Tahiti, which arrived in Australia on Bastille Day, 1989.

The next project was the acquisition of the Super Constellation, which supporters Gary Squire and Fr Jeremy Flynn made generous donations to get the project started. The restoration of the Super Constellation and its flight to Australia are worthy of a separate story in itself – in fact, a DVD has been made of the project. Well known aviation museum identity, Ron Cuskelly, sought assistance from Qantas to support the project, but unfortunately the Qantas Board was unwilling. However, former RAAF Air Vice Marshal, Ted Radford, the Deputy Chief Executive of Qantas, was able to supply Business Class seats for HARS volunteers to travel to the USA.

For the future, Bob stated that there was perhaps another year's work required before the DC-4 is flying again. The Southern Cross replica is still under repair and a new wing is being constructed. Work is continuing on the second C-47, and it is intended to paint this aircraft in the drab WWII colour scheme.

The Convair C-131F (340) is under restoration in Tucson AZ. It was a former Admiral's Barge in the US Navy, and a decision is still pending on how this aircraft will be painted when it eventually arrives in Australia.

The meeting was well attended by many members and visitors, and all were most impressed by Bob's open and informative lecture.

Vale

Ron Yates

The Australian aviation community lost one of its "greats" when to Ron Yates passed away in Sydney on October 27.

Ron is acknowledged as being instrumental to shaping Australia's airline industry, having been principally responsible for introducing the Lockheed Electra, Boeing 707, 747 and 767 to Australian service when he was the Qantas project manager in charge the evaluation and introduction of these aircraft into service.

He also played a prominent role in bringing the Super Constellation into Qantas service as part of a career with the airline that spanned some 40 years, culminating in his role as Chief Executive Officer between 1984 and 1986. He was the only engineer in the history of Qantas to have reached the top job.

He joined Qantas following service with the RAAF as flight test engineer. His development work on the 707 improved the performance of the aircraft to enable Qantas to operate it on trans-Pacific routes with what became the 707-138.

Ron became the patron of the project to bring back Australia's first 707-138, which now resides at the Qantas Founders Museum in Longreach.

In June 1993, he was appointed a Member in the General Division of the Order of Australia for services to aviation, and in 2000 was made an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society.

He was the founding deputy chairman of the Federal Airports Corporation, which was established in 1988. Ron was appointed to the Board of the Civil Aviation Authority in June 1990, and became Chairman of its Superannuation subsidiary and its Capital Projects committee.

He was also an Executive Councillor of the International Federation of Airworthiness and President of the Australian division of the Royal Aeronautical Society from 1977 to 1979 and 1982 to 1984.

In May 2000 the degree of Doctor of Engineering (honoris causa) was conferred upon Ron at a ceremony held at Sydney University.

Ron Yates' legacy to commercial aviation in Australia will be remembered for generations.

From our Northern Correspondent

A North Queensland, Mareeba Warbirds Encounter.

'Twas the morn following the dramatic total eclipse of the sun, and approximately fifty thousand Celestial enthusiasts had descended on Cairns to witness the event, an incredible sight to behold.

But one visitor to Cairns was on a different mission, this visitor, Peter Oliver, was a former Qantas colleague of fellow member of AHSA Roger Kennedy. It had been suggested that Peter contact me, as he was desirous of a possible Warbird flight at Mareeba.

Peter and I finally caught up at the airfield; I say finally, as Peter, through no fault of his own, had real difficulty in finding the location, and I was truly not surprised. It is some while since I was there and can honestly say it is very poorly signposted and the signage that is shown is very misleading.

As an advisory for any members venturing this way, I would say leaving Cairns, head up the Kuranda Range from Smithfield, following the signs for Mareeba, a very twisting climb up the range but straightening up at the top. Passing Kuranda on the left, it's a straight fast run to the junction with meeting the Kennedy Highway, and this is where it is very misleading.

As the signs state Right to Mareeba and Left to Atherton, for Mareeba airport you need to turn 'Left' for Atherton, as if you turn Right, it takes you through Mareeba township, in completely the wrong direction.

Sounds strange, but true, and the first sign you will know you are on the correct road, will be a sign saying Military Museum, on your left just short distance of travel, then you will see, again on your left, an Army Tank painted yellow, (this museum is closed), keep driving approximately five kilometres, and the airfield will be on your right.

However, we had several hours of enjoyment once settled, which I am happy to report, included a very enjoyable flight in Warbird's Winjeel. The Nanchang, the least expensive aircraft to fly in was unserviceable with vacuum problems, but the Winjeel was a close second choice, and worked out very well as I managed to get a concession price, and it being a three seat aircraft Peter and I flew together. The pilot who arranged it all has been a close friend for many years, and about to retire, so the timing was perfect.

I've stated above that it was a very enjoyable flight, I'm truly hopeful it was so equally as much for Peter, as we experienced a couple of 'rolls' plus a left and right hand 'roll off the top', and to finish, we did a low level beat up of the runway, before turning back in to land.

Maybe Pete will attend a future AHSA (NSW) meeting and he might impart his version of events. It was certainly a pleasure to meet him, and be in his company.

Your Cairns Correspondent, Roy Fordham.

RAAF News

C-130H Hercules

The RAAF has revealed a C-130H featuring colourful tail art to mark the looming retirement of the type from RAAF service this month (November).

37SQN C-130H A97-005's tail art features a silhouette of a C-130H against a orange and yellow sunset, the 36 and 37SQN badges, and the legend '34 Years of Serving Australia'.

"We have deployed these aircraft in support of operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and East Timor, and used

them to evacuate Australian citizens from Cambodia in 1997," Commander Air Lift Group Air Commodore Gary Martin said.

"They have left a considerable record of accomplishment, and one which all men and women who have worked on this aircraft can take great pride in"

A reunion for past and present members of the C-130H community was held at RAAF Base Richmond on November 24, and on November 19 a fly-past of 2 C-130H Hercules was carried out over Sydney, many suburbs and along the coastline.

The eight operational C-130Hs of the original 12 strong fleet will be retired from RAAF service on November 30. *(Courtesy Defence Public Relations)*

35 Squadron

In September 2012, Air Marshal G.C. Brown, Chief of Air Force announced that he had approved the reformation of Number 35 Squadron from 1 January 2013, to prepare for the arrival of the Alenia C-27J Spartan battlefield airlifter in 2015.

"Under the command of Wing Commander Brad Clarke, 35 Squadron will have an initial posting of 25 personnel at RAAF Base Richmond. From July 2013 to January 2016, another four posting tranches, at six monthly intervals, are planned to enable the full establishment of 35 Squadron in January 2016", Air Marshal Brown said.

"35 Squadron has a long and distinguished history. Formed at RAAF Base Pearce in March 1942, No 35 Squadron was equipped with light transport aircraft, including Avro Ansons, De Havilland Dragon Rapides, and Northrop Delta. After World War Two, 35 Squadron returned Australian Prisoners of War before being disbanded at RAAF Base Townsville in June 1946.

In July 1964, the RAAF Transport Flight in Vietnam was formed and was renamed 35 Squadron in 1966. After Vietnam, the Squadron moved to Townsville, where Iroquois helicopters joined the Squadron's Caribous. With his mixed fleet of aircraft, No 35 Squadron undertook army tactical support tasks and civil aid operations, including search and rescue, medical evacuations and flood relief work. In 2000, 35 Squadron was disestablished.

Nicknamed 'Wallaby Airlines', 35 Squadron has a proud history of operational and humanitarian service. I'm looking forward to seeing the Wallaby Airlines tail-flash flying again in Australian skies on the C-27J."

New Book

Never Been Hit – An Australian Fighter Pilot's Story. By Peter R. Fitton

Never Been Hit is Peter Fitton's first book. He came to write it as a result of a chance encounter with former Flying Officer, Les Streete. From the promotional material:

"The basis of the story was there from the start. It lay in the form of a tattered log book and a sheaf of photographs, but most importantly, the goodwill and enthusiastic support of Les. Perhaps Les had mused on the matter of someone writing an account of his war experiences, then again he may have reached a stage in his life where a story about his past became a pressing need. Whatever the circumstances, Les Streete embraced the task that lay ahead. In time, Les made his diaries available to Peter. There were two. One was a factual daily account of his observations; the other was very private. It was as if his conscience had been the author. They enabled Peter to better understand the man and to reach inside his being. There were the numerous small things; the thoughts of his family back home, his sweetheart, his mates, the adventures whilst travelling on periods of leave, the numerous girls and the aftermath of losing friends in combat. The many diary entries became like a dot puzzle, where the task was to join the dots and make the image. Everything was interconnected, enabling Peter to construct the story of Les.

Peter has great regard for the generation who faced the challenge of the Second World War. Against what must have seemed insurmountable odds, they went forth to face the enemy and to drive him back to his homeland. Their sacrifice gave us the freedom and opportunity we take for granted today. We must never forget their deeds and it is my hope that *Never Been Hit* adds to their tales of sacrifice and daring."

The book is available on-line in Trade Paperback at $29.99 or hardback at $49.99 plus P&P. Check the web-site for details: http://www.neverbeenhit.net/author.html.

New DVD

New England Airways

Fred Niven has advised of information received about a new DVD on the history of New England Airways, which became Airlines of Australia. Fred said that from the many emails that he has received during the production, he is sure that it will fascinate all of those interested in the parts of the ANA group history.

To quote from the supporting publicity, "The documentary records the airline's humble beginnings from January 1931 (5 years before Reg Ansett took to the skies) to 1942 when Airlines of Australia was completely absorbed by Australian National Airways.

"Packed with priceless old footage, interviews and remarkable images, it is a must-have documentary.

Learn what it was like to be a flight attendant in 1938. Discover the trials and tribulations of NEA's founders GA Robinson and pilot Keith Virtue. Marvel at Australia's first DC-3 and its impact on Australian aviation."

The DVD also includes much information about the Avro 10 tri Motor, as well as the Dragon Rapide, the Tugan Gannet, the Ryan monoplane and many others.

Orders can only be made via the internet and the DVD will not be available in shops. The cost of the DVD is $65 including P&P and available on the web-site: www.newenglandairways.com.au.

AHSA Meetings

Brisbane

Meetings are held at 7.00pm for 7.30pm on the last Friday of each month at the Royal Queensland Aero Club, Archerfield. Visitors are welcome; contact George Palmer at ahsa_qld@hotmail.com.

Friday 30 November 2012. Guest speaker for the last meeting for 2012 is Rex Ramsey. Rex joined the RAAF in January 1950 and graduated December 1953. He will share his experiences in Iwakuni Japan, Kunsan

Korea and Williamtown with 77squadron during 1954 through to September 1955 and then as part of 263 Squadron RAF Wattisham in October 1955.

Melbourne

Meetings are held on the fourth Wednesday of the month at RAAF Association, 24 Camberwell Rd, Hawthorn East, in the auditorium. Parking is available under the building – enter from the lane at the south end. The meetings start at 7.30pm - ring the bell if the front door is shut. Visitors welcome – contact Antony Grage on 0418 170 395.

Wednesday 28th November – The 2012 John Duigan Memorial Lecture: George Morgan, the Director of Technology and Business Development at the GippsAero division of Mahindra Aerospace, will speak about the history and future of GippsAero and its development of the highly successful GA8 Airvan utility aircraft. Please let us know if you are attending.

Sunday 16th December: The AHSA Christmas Barbeque at Moorabbin Airport: meet at noon on the grass near the used aircraft sales park. BYO partner and aviation-minded friends, plus food, drinks, chairs, hats – smoke and conversation will be provided. The Australian National Aviation Museum (www.aarg.com.au) will be open and will welcome AHSA visitors.

Plastic-Waste Fuel Update

As this issue of *Southern Skies* is being prepared for publication, no updates have been received on Jeremy Roswell's planned attempt to fly from Sydney to London in a Cessna 182 powered by synthetic diesel fuel made from plastic waste. The last advice was that the flight had been delayed until November, but no further news has been forthcoming.

Editor – *Southern Skies*

Still, we have no volunteers to take over the position of Editor of *Southern Skies*. This is a most disappointing situation, for without a newsletter, the Society is not able to convey the information sought by our members. Without an Editor, the newsletter may have to revert to advice of the next meeting only, plus, if he still remains willing, the *Loops and Landings* Supplement by John Scott.

One option that I urge members to consider would be a group of say three or four members, each one of which could provide a section of the newsletter, such as a précis of the previous meeting, and a preview of the next meeting; another could provide information on upcoming events; another could provide internet or web-site and book information; and the other might assist in compiling the contributions. Any volunteers should contact Ian Debenham or me as soon as possible to ensure a smooth handover.

This will be the last issue of *Southern Skies* edited by me, and in the seven years as sole Editor and the prior three years as contributing Editor, I have been fortunate to have received contributions from a number of members. In particular, John Scott's *Loops and Landings* has been a wonderful collection of stories through his meticulous research and excellent word-smithing capabilities. Keith White has been a regular contributor, and, in particular, his story of W.E. Hart provided a fascinating insight into this once lesser-known aviator. Our North Queensland correspondent, Roy Fordham has been a regular contributor and his knowledge of Stag Lane and all things de Havilland has often featured in his articles. Others who have been regular contributors include Peter Coates, Anthony Coleiro, Ian Debenham, Ken Garland, Bill Holswich, Roger McDonald, Fred Niven, Jack Powell and Judy Rainsford. Thanks to those members in particular, and to others who have come up with a snippet of useful material on less frequent occasions.

2013 Subscriptions

This issue of *Southern Skies* is accompanied by the 2013 Subscription Renewal form, which includes the details of AHSA (NSW) Inc and AHSA Inc Joint Membership.

If you wish to have Joint Membership, then $65 is the subscription rate for 2013. This offer entitles members to receive the AHSA (NSW) Inc newsletter *Southern Skies* 11 times per annum, free attendance at meetings which includes supper and usually features a guest speaker, and the AHSA Inc quality journal *Aviation Heritage* and *AHSA Newsletter*, which are published 4 times per annum. They are also welcome to attend meetings in Melbourne with a token amount payable for supper.

Members, who wish only to retain an AHSA (NSW) Inc membership, pay $25 for the newsletter and meetings.

Calendar of Events

1 December 2012 Aircraft Showcase – Pearl Harbour – Temora Aviation Museum. Temora NSW.
4-6 January 2013 The Great Eastern Fly-In. Evans Head NSW.
12 January 2013 Queensland Air Museum Aero Engine Run Day. Caloundra Qld.
19 January 2013 Aircraft Showcase – CAC Australian Made - Temora Aviation Museum. Temora NSW.
2 February 2013 Aircraft Showcase – WWII to Korea – Temora Aviation Museum. Temora NSW
16 February 2013 Aircraft Showcase – Temora Aviation Museum. Temora NSW
26 February – 3 March 2013 Australian International Air Show. Avalon Vic

Contributions and Contacts

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

Thanks

Thanks to Peter Coates, Roy Fordham, Roger McDonald, Fred Niven and John Scott for their contributions to this newsletter.

THE PRESIDENT AND COMMITTEE OF AHSA (NSW) INC WISH ALL OUR READERS A MERRY AND PEACEFUL CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

LOOPS AND LANDINGS

Inspired by John Kingsford-Smith

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,... – Part 10

Margaret Gilruth, an Australian author and correspondent based in London, became a close friend of Nancy during their times together in 1938/39. Margaret's dispatches to Australian newspapers provided information about Nancy's activities in the UK and Europe. In a special report she described Nancy's reception at Moscow's airport on May 3, 1939, by a select group of male and female pilots who were all *Heroes of the Soviet Union.* During her one week stay in Moscow, Nancy met the head of Aeroflot, and was shown all facets of its operations, which included the aerial ambulance service, aerial agriculture and aerial fire fighting. Intourist took care of her sightseeing around Moscow, attendance at a matinee performance of *The Nutcracker Suite* by the Bolshoi Ballet, and a night at the Opera. Nancy's social programme was arranged by A.B.A. representatives and the Swedish Embassy. She was given a farewell party at the Embassy on the evening of May 8, which continued to 3:15 am the following morning. Of this party Nancy wrote: "One of the young male secretaries at the Swedish Embassy paid me far too much attention and as I looked in the narrow stem of a glass of champagne, I said: 'Whenever I look into the hollow stem of a bubbling glass of champagne, I will remember you' – and I do. He became an Ambassador, but I never saw him again." Nancy would have had little time for sleep before preparing to board the inaugural express passenger flight from Moscow to London, which departed at 8 am on May 9. In transit through Stockholm, Nancy was the guest at lunch of the British Ambassador, Sir Edmund Monson, together with representatives of A.B.A., and a party of well wishers. At Schiphol Airport she was met by Mr H. Nieuwenhuis, the General Manager of KNILM, who presented her with farewell gifts, and a large bouquet of Dutch roses, in recognition of a job well done promoting both KLM and KNILM. Margaret Gilruth was at Croydon Airport to meet her when the A.B.A. DC3 landed at 11 pm: "Miss Nancy Bird, the 23 year old Australian airwoman, has helped to make aviation history by being on the maiden flight of the one - day service from Moscow to London in the *Moscow Air Express."*

Observant readers of L&L must now be confused by reference to D.D.L., (Det Danske Luftfartselskab), the Danish airline, in November's Part 9, where it should have been A.B.A., (Aktiebolaget Aerotransport), the Swedish airline. Apologies for the error. Nancy's visit to Russia was sponsored only by the Swedish airline, A.B.A. As a point of interest A.B.A., D.D.L., and D.N.L., (Det Norske Luftfartselskap), the Norwegian airline, did become the one scheduled airline operator when they merged after WWII under S.A.S., (Scandinavian Airlines System).

During my research for this series of L.&L. I have been intrigued by the enthusiasm with which the upper echelons of government, business, and society embraced Nancy during her first overseas adventure. To some degree I can relate to her experience. Like Nancy, I travelled to the U.K., Europe and Scandinavia as a 22 year old and then, as a 23 year old, crossed the Atlantic by ocean liner to the USA. My objective was to learn all I could about civil engineering; Nancy's was to learn all she could about civil aviation. Nancy experienced political turbulence in Europe through the Munich Crisis. I was in London during the Suez Crisis and the Hungarian Uprising. I had the advantage of a degree in civil engineering, a profession at the time devoid of competition from females, and found no difficulty gaining employment in London. Nancy confessed that she was not good at lessons, lacked concentration, left school at thirteen, and then went to the country to housekeep for her father. She later chose a profession hostile to women. The only job she was offered in London was with *Imperial Airways* in its catering department on a wage of £3 a week, which after paying her weekly rent of £2, would have left her little to live on. Nancy was a young woman pilot with some fame for her tenacity while flying in the outback, but there were women pilots in the U.K. and Europe with much more fame and experience with record breaking flying. I recall the class and business barriers in London in 1956/57. Before WWII they were even more inflexible. How did Nancy break through these barriers? I am grateful to Margaret Gilruth for her assessment given at the time Nancy arrived at Croydon Airport after her historic flight from Moscow: " As officials came forward to ask her if if there was anything they

could do for her and as she said 'good bye' to the pilots, I realised again that Nancy Bird, a diminutive, charming but resolute person, has made herself felt in Europe in a way few, more important Australians have achieved." Put simply, Nancy was born with something not given to many, the rare *"X" Factor.*

An illustration of Nancy's stamina can be seen in her energy sapping week in Russia ending with the exhausting day long flight in a DC3 from Moscow, which arrived at Croydon Airport at 11 pm on May 9. The ABC in Sydney had already published its programme for May 10, which included a talk by Miss Nancy Bird at 10:45 pm titled, *Flying to Russia and Back*. This commitment required Nancy to be out of bed by 4 am with her prepared script, and to be in the BBC studios by 6 am to prepare for the short wave relay to Australia. Later that day she still had the energy to attend a cocktail party at Australia House for the newly appointed Governor of South Australia, Sir Malcolm Barclay - Harvey KCMG.

There was now just one more busy week remaining in London before Nancy caught the Waterloo Station boat train to Southampton to embark on the Blue Riband Cunard Liner, *Queen Mary*, bound for New York. She had managed to gain assistance with her passage through the Vacuum Oil Company's Australian representative, Fred Haigh. A director of Vacuum Oil, Frederick S. Fales, was also a passenger, and had the pleasant task of chaperoning Nancy during the five day Atlantic Crossing. Before leaving London she had been in contact with agents of the major U.S. airlines and manufacturers, and letters of introduction had been sent. However, when the *Queen Mary* berthed at New York at 8 am on May 22, the usual welcoming party was nowhere to be seen. She had arrived before any of the letters had generated a response. For the first time on her overseas adventure she was without the assistance of Dutch or Australian representation, and was left to rely on her own initiative. On the day of her arrival, after clearing customs and finding her accommodation, she was at the United Airlines office checking on flights across the U.S.A. The next day, a Tuesday, she had organised three meetings including with Lester Gardner, Secretary of The Institute of Aeronautical Science. That evening she went out to Flushing Meadow to visit the World's Fair, and to check on the Australian Pavilion which was being prepared for its grand opening. On the Wednesday she met with John C. Cooper, a Vice President of Pan American Airways, and Vilhjalmur Stefansson, a Canadian polar explorer and colleague of Hubert Wilkins. That evening she again visited the World's Fair as a guest at the opening of the Australian Pavilion. Early on Thursday morning she was picked up by a Pan American guide and driven out to Newark for an inspection of the airport and its operations.

When in Germany, Nancy went onboard the brand new LZ 130, Graf Zeppelin II, an airship that came too late to take part in the transatlantic passenger service between Frankfurt and New York. She was also briefed on Lufthansa's experimental program using a Blohm & Voss Ha 139 seaplane, and catapult equipped depot ships, to carry mail across the Atlantic to New York. Now in New York herself, she was again witness to the evolving history of transatlantic commercial aviation. Pan American Airways made arrangements for one of the more memorable days of her overseas trip. First of all, she was invited to a lunch where she met test pilot Jim Taylor, who was currently flying the Civil Aeronautics Authority's Fleetwings amphibian. Just a week earlier, on May 20, the 12th anniversary of Charles Lindbergh's solo transatlantic flight, the C.A.A. had taken part in a ceremony at Port Washington, Long Island, by issuing a certificate granting permission for Pan Am to commence the first scheduled transatlantic air mail service. In anticipation of the occasion the Post Office Department issued a special 30c transatlantic air mail stamp. And so, on May 20, the Pan Am Boeing 314 flying boat, *Yankee Clipper*, took off from Port Washington and set course for Europe, via Lisbon and Marseilles, carrying one ton of mail. *Yankee Clipper* was due back on May 27. On that day Nancy kept an appointment with Jim Taylor at the Wall Street water airport on the southern end of Manhattan Island. They took off in the little Fleetwings between ships and tugs, and under two bridges, before gaining sufficient altitude to fly over Manhattan and then circle the Statue of Liberty. The Fleetwings then flew over Long Island, put its wheels down, and landed at Roosevelt Field. Nancy was now standing on hallowed ground, with its links to Lindbergh and other historic aviation events. It was then off to the nearby exclusive Aviation Country Club for lunch. In the afternoon Nancy and Jim were driven back to the Fleetwings to fly on to Port Washington to welcome the return of the mighty *Yankee Clipper*, back from its historic transatlantic flight. What would I give for that one day of Nancy's experience, May 27, 1939? **J. Scott.**