



TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY Incorporated

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 01 AUTUMN 2020

Welcome to the First Newsletters of the TAHS

The aim of the society is to collect, catalogue and present to Tasmanians the colourful and exciting history of our island state's aviation growth that played such an important part in the development of Australia's commercial aviation.

Formed in April 2019 at a meeting in Hangar 17 at Launceston Airport, by a small group of dedicated enthusiasts, the meeting developed a criteria and plan for a process involving the collection, cataloguing and display of historical artefacts, documents and eventually aircraft.

The society was fortunate to have Mr Robyn Holyman accept an offer to be our first Patron. The name Holyman embodies all that was early shipping transportation and the family went on to develop commercial aviation between Tasmania, Melbourne, Flinders and King Island ultimately to become Australian National Airways (ANA).

Within the first twelve months the society had taken possession of "Miss Flinders" an aircraft that played a significant role in the development of commercial aviation in Tasmania.

More about Hangar 17 and "Miss Flinders" later in this edition and the history of Launceston Airport and Tasmanian aviation history in future editions.

In March 2020, the society's first AGM was held with the following members elected:

President:	Andrew Johnson
Vice President:	John Brett
Secretary:	Chris Byrne
Treasurer:	Cranston Gilbert
Public Officer:	Neil Louis
Newsletter Editor:	Wayne Dearing

Membership is available at a cost of \$20 per year and application forms are available through our web page www.tahs.org.au or directly by emailing membership@tahs.org.au.



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President's Report April 2020

Since the establishment the Tasmanian Aviation Historical Society (TAHS) in April last year, an enormous amount has been achieved. I feel very fortunate to be part of such an interesting and diverse group who are so passionate about aviation.

TAHS are very grateful to the Launceston Distillery for providing the inspirational venue to hold our regular monthly meetings. "Hangar 17" or the "Holyman Hangar" while providing inspiration also delivers challenges. Attending members have demonstrated immense strength and managed remarkable focus considering they are surrounded by top shelf whisky seducing all their senses. The continual distraction of aircraft passing directly in front of the window during meetings also seems to have been managed. Considering both these challenges an impressive amount of work has been achieved, successfully establishing this society and beginning to promote Tasmania's rich aviation history.

The Georgetown "Wings and Things" provided the appropriate event for TAHS to make itself known to other aviation enthusiasts and the general public. The day was a successful one that attracted new memberships and positive public awareness of the group.

Community support has come in many forms to this group over the last twelve months. I have been pleasantly surprised at the number of opportunities available in Tasmania to establish a group such as TAHS. We have been fortunate to secure \$500 from the Premier's discretionary fund and \$700 towards conservation materials from the Cultural Heritage Organisations Grant. These amongst other financial donations have been critical in the establishment of the society.

Other non - financial support for TAHS over the twelve months includes the Arts Tasmania Roving curator's program. Support in the form of 10 days of mentoring and guidance will be crucial in the development of the society as a repository for historical aviation objects, photos and documents. Topics being covered include direction with creating a collection management policy and the handling and care of collection objects.

The collection of objects was given a significant boost with the acquisition of "Miss Flinders". Throughout this process TAHS was shown a great deal of support from important local community players. Letters came from the Mayor of Launceston Albert Van Zetten, Federal MP for Bass, Bridget Archer, Launceston Airport, the RAAF, Evandale History Society and Flinders Island Furneaux Museum. I believe this demonstrates the importance in the establishment of an institution focused on the Tasmanian Aviation story, but also a trust in the group to take on this responsibility.

On this note I feel the future is very positive for TAHS. Over the next twelve months (depending on the COVID 19 disruption) I would like to see the completion of the Roving



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Curator's program allowing the society to be in a much stronger position to deliver our constitutional objectives. Awareness of the society will continue to gather momentum which will bring financial support with memberships, as well as more stories and information around the history of Tasmanian Aviation.

History seems to be repeating itself with the need to again raise funds to house "Miss Flinders". As in the early 1960's when the aircraft was returned to Tasmania TAHS will have to be creative in the way it leads the process of finding a location and developing an appropriate display environment. It's an exciting challenge that I feel confident this group will succeed in.

In closing I would like acknowledge the significant work done by the executive team this establishment year and once again thanks to the Launceston Distillery for their ongoing support and interest in Tasmanian Aviation history.

Regards,

Andrew Johnson – President



DESOUTTER MONOPLANE VH- UEE “MISS FLINDERS”



“Miss Flinders” on Display at the QVMAG at Inveresk

Late last year TAHS became aware “Miss Flinders”, that was on display at the Queen Victoria and Art Gallery at Inveresk since 1997, was to be removed from public display. The museum were concerned about the integrity of the plane, especially the wings, when the plane was suspended from its fuselage.

Members of TAHS made a commitment for the society to retain the Desoutter as part of their responsibility to address the lack of historical aviation focus in Tasmania.

The significance of the role played by “Miss Flinders” in the development of Australia’s aviation history cannot be underestimated. Arriving in Australia in 1932 it was used to operate the first commercial air service between Launceston’s Western Junction and Flinders Island until 1935. During this period the aircraft was owned and operated by Lawrence Johnson a relation of the Society’s current President.

Lawrence Johnson subsequently merged with shipping line owners the Holyman brothers to form Tasmanian Aerial Services and in 1934 Holyman’s Airways the forerunner of Australian National Airways and family of our Patron Robyn Holyman.



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In the 1960's a group led by the Airforce Association discovered, rescued and returned the aircraft to Launceston. The aircraft was restored and in 1966 displayed in the Launceston Airport terminal.

In 1997 "Miss Flinders" was removed from the airport and taken to the Queen Victoria and Art Gallery where the aircraft has been on display for the last ten years.

With support from Launceston Airport, local politicians, the Mayor of Launceston, Airforce Association and various historical bodies, the custody of "Miss Flinders" has been transferred to the TAHS.

The QVMAG undertook the massive task of dismantling Miss Flinders, removing the wing (which had been cut into 2 sections when it was returned to Tasmania in the 1960s), the tail section and undercarriage. The plane was then stored on two skids and three crates which were delivered to Hangar 17 on in late March, together with the Gypsy III engine. The dismantled plane was stored on a specially built storage platform (special thanks to Cliff Walters for supervising its construction).



"Miss Flinders" back home after 85 years absence in the Holyman Hangar at Western Junction

Our long-term target date to display date the reconstructed Desoutter is 2022, the 90th anniversary of the arrival of the aircraft in Launceston.



The Miss Flinders Story

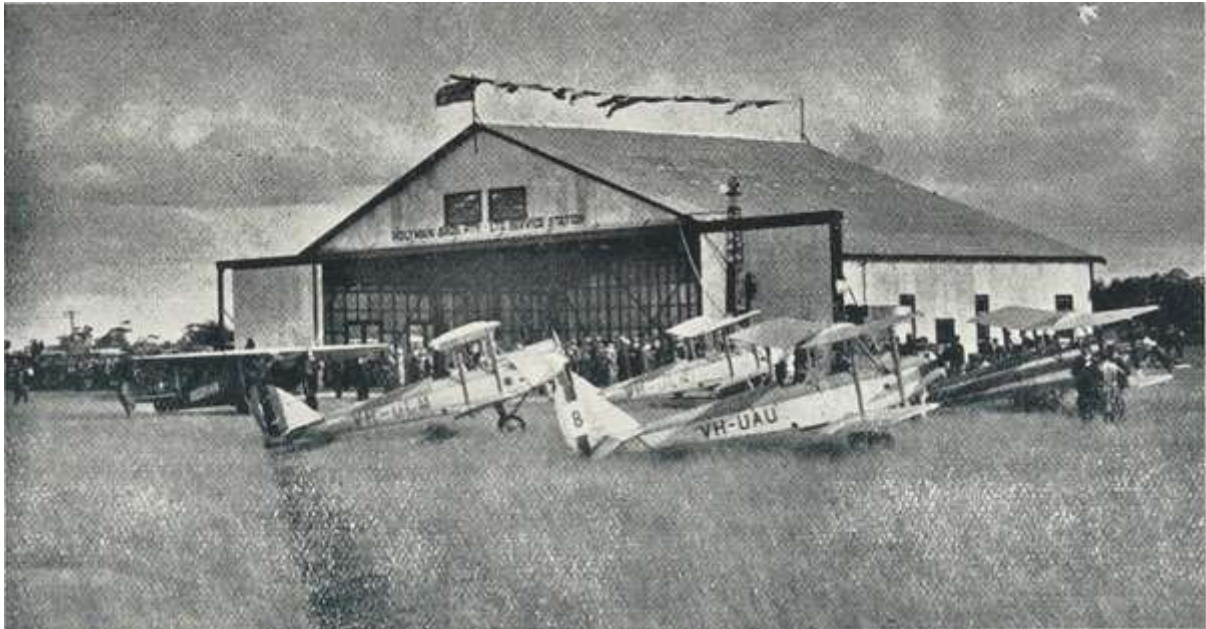
Future newsletters will keep members and interested persons updated with the project but up until then here is a brief history of the first five years in the life of “Miss Flinders” including its early life in Tasmania.

Date	Owner (Location)	Details
1930		Aircraft built at Croydon Aerodrome London by the Desoutter Aircraft Co Ltd and powered by a de Havilland Gipsy Mk III engine
1930, Jul 08	Iona National Air Taxis and Flying School (Ireland)	Registered as EI-AAD
1931, Mar 06	(United Kingdom)	Registered as G-ABOM
1931, Nov 11	Harold Jeffreys and Harold Jenkins (Melbourne)	Purchased the plane in England
1931, Dec 27 to 1932, Feb 10	Jeffreys and Jenkins (Melbourne)	Fly the plane to Australia in stages via India, arrived in Darwin after 44 days
1932, Mar 11	Laurie Johnson (Tasmania)	Registered as VH-UEE, “Miss Flinders”
1932, Mar 18	Laurie Johnson (Tasmania)	First regular passenger service to Flinders Island
1932, Oct	Tasmanian Aerial Services (Tasmania)	Laurie Johnson and the Holyman Brothers amalgamate
1933, Dec	Tasmanian Aerial Services (Tasmania)	Probably the first aero medical evacuation from King Island to Western Junction, piloted by Laurie Johnson
1934, Jul	Holyman’s Airways (Tasmania)	Tasmanian Aerial Services renamed as Holyman’s Airways
1935, Jun	de Havilland Aircraft Co. Mascot (NSW)	Sold in part payment for a new aircraft purchased by Holyman Airways Pty Ltd

“More in the next newsletter”



HANGAR 17 “HOLYMANS HANGAR”



The opening of the “Holyman Brothers Service Station” in early 1933. Miss Flinders is parked on the right, with the Arero Club Gipsy Moths in the foreground

With the arrival and subsequent storage of “Miss Flinders” in Hangar 17 it is only appropriate to visit the history of this building.

The building is Tasmania’s oldest aviation building still standing in its original location and effectively was where Tasmanian commercial aviation commenced. Being constructed in 1933 by Victor and Ivan Holyman with Laurie Johnson the building became known as the Holyman Hangar and commenced aerial services transporting passengers to the Bass Straight Islands using both “Miss Flinders” and the Fox Moth Biplane “Miss Currie”

The airline expanded until 1936 when it was renamed Australian National Airlines (ANA) and was to become Australia’s largest domestic aviation operating throughout the country until the 1950’s. The Hangar was extended to its present size and upgraded passenger departure lounge and airline offices added.

In 1957 ANA was purchased by Ansett and operated as Ansett – ANA until 1968 when it was renamed Ansett Airlines. With the opening of the current Launceston airport in the mid 1960’s, the Hangar was used by Ansett Airfreight until the company ceased operation in 2001.

In 2015 the Hangar was reborn as Launceston Distillery producing fine quality single malt Tasmanian Whisky.



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The history of Hangar 17 (“Holyman’s Hangar”) is one of several historical buildings and activities associated with Western Junction now known simply as Launceston Airport.

WINGS AND THINGS GEORGETOWN AIRPORT FEBRUARY 2020

As mentioned in the Presidents report TAHS travelled to Georgetown and displayed memorabilia collected to date and provided information as to membership of the association. This was our first exhibition and public interest was encouraging. It is envisaged that we will visit other similar venues around the state in the future.





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GUEST HISTORIANS

In future newsletters it is envisaged that articles written or submitted by guest authors will be presented.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS / OBJECTIVES

Despite the obvious disruptions caused by the CONVID - 19 virus the association is determined to develop and catalogue the history of Tasmanian aviation. Listed below are the initial objectives of the Association

- To document and present the history of the aerodromes in Tasmania, with Western Junction being particularly important given it was the first in the state.
- To recognise, document and promote the aviation history of Tasmania.
- Collect and maintain historical items and oral histories.
- Publish historical items on our website and through our newsletter.
- Provide items for display.
- Support other historical societies and parties who are also supporting Tasmanian aviation history.
- Long term to acquire, restore and exhibit historical aircraft.

We trust you enjoy newsletter number one and invite any comments and articles on historical matters. They can be forwarded to the Newsletter Editor via the email in the footer or via our web site.

EDITION NUMBER 2 COMMING IN JULY