



TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY Incorporated

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 04 SUMMER 2020

Editorial

Welcome to the fourth issue of our newsletter. Since our last publication the committee has been actively planning for the Society's future following easing of the pandemic conditions. Initially the society's growth and development will be based on both short and long term plans involving displays, collections and cataloguing of historical aviation memorabilia. Short term sees Hangar 17 once again part of that history. An area of the hangar is being used to display our collection of artifacts, in addition to the stored "Miss Flinders". We held our first Open Day in late November to coincide with the 90th Anniversary of the first flight off Western Junction, which allows the public who may be interested in donating objects for display to discuss the process. Long term plans are still in the development stage and both the Newsletter, web page and Face Book site will keep everyone up to date.

Since the last Newsletter a group of TAHS members travelled to Hobart for a visit to the Aero Club of Southern Tasmania. Hopefully this will be the start of other visits to aero clubs, aviation museums and likeminded groups. The Hobart visit resulted in an opportunity to meet members and discuss aviation history and also gain an appreciation of the difficulty facing general aviation today, not only because of the pandemic, but the regulations governing this section of aviation.

On behalf of the committee I would take this opportunity to wish everybody a very happy festive season with families and friends as well as a safe and prosperous 2021.

Wayne Dearing

Newsletter Editor


This Issue Includes

- Historical archives of early Tasmanian aviators – The World War 1 Aces No 2
- Tasmanian aviation giants – Hudson Fysh the Co-Founder of QANTAS – Part 3
- Wynard (Burnie) Airport - a brief history
- Photos and history from the archives
- "Miss Flinders" the continuing story
- Mysteries of aviation
- 60 years A tribute to the Tasmanian Division of the RFDS
- Aviation humour
- Do you remember?
- Help solve the secret



Historical Archives of Early Tasmanian Aviators

Tasmanian Born Air Aces of World War 1

	Allan Runciman Brown	
	Born:	April 24, 1895
	Joined:	August 24, 1914
	Died:	December, 1965
	Serial Number:	1961

Born in Launceston, Tasmania, Captain (later Wing Commander) Allan Runciman Brown was a World War I flying ace credited with five aerial victories.

Brown originally served with the Australian Artillery. He transferred to the Royal Flying Corps on 5 December 1916 and was assigned to No. 68 Squadron RFC/1 Squadron AFC in Egypt. There he was teamed with Lieutenant Garfield Finlay as his observer/gunner on Bristol F2b Fighters; who was his gunner for four of his five triumphs. Brown's modus operandi was to force enemy planes into landing, and then destroy them on the ground with bombs and bullets. He scored his first win on 3 May 1918 near Suweilah, and his last one on 22 August 1918 at Ramleh. He also carried out successful ground attacks on cavalry and gun emplacements.



BRISTOL FIGHTER F.2 (Type flown by Allan Runciman and Garfield Finlay)



Following an action on 22 August 1918 Brown, then an Acting Captain, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC). The citation is printed below:

Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC)

Lieut. (A./Capt.) Allan Runciman Brown (Australian F.C.). (EGYPT)

On 22 August Capt. Brown, with Lieut. Finlay as his observer, attacked an enemy two-seater, forcing it to land in our lines. On four other occasions these officers have engaged and destroyed enemy aircraft, displaying marked gallantry and skill. In addition, they have rendered most valuable service in attacking enemy cavalry, anti-aircraft guns and other ground targets, inflicting heavy loss.



World War One Distinguished Flying Cross

Allan Runciman Brown's Victories					
Date	Time	Unit	Aircraft	Observer	Location
03 May 1918	0700	1 (AFC)	Bristol Fighter (B1149)	Lt G Finlay	SW of Suweilah
08 Jun 1918	0700	1 (AFC)	Bristol Fighter (B1284)	Lt H A Letch	SE of Amman
27 Jun 1918	0645	1 (AFC)	Bristol Fighter (B1149)	Lt G Finlay	Kutrani
28 Jul 1918	1200	1 (AFC)	Bristol Fighter (B1149)	Lt G Finlay	Wadi Fara
22 Aug 1918	1315	1 (AFC)	Bristol Fighter (B1284)	Lt G Finlay	Ramleh

Following the War Runciman returned to Australia where he died in Boyup Brook, Western Australia in 1965 aged 70 years.



Tasmanian Aviation Giants – Sir William Hudson Fysh The Co-Founder of “QANTAS”

Part 3 The Post War Era

In 1947, Qantas Empire Airways Ltd (QEA) was nationalised, with the Australian Labor government led by Prime Minister Ben Chifley buying the shares owned by BOAC, followed by those of QANTAS Limited. Nationalised airlines were normal at the time, and the Qantas board encouraged this move. After the completion of the buyout, QANTAS Limited was wound up and liquidated to shareholders.

Hudson Fysh continued as Managing Director.

Shortly after nationalisation, QEA began its first services outside the British Empire to Tokyo via Darwin and Manila with Avro Lancastrian aircraft. These aircraft were also deployed between Sydney and London in co-operation with BOAC, but were soon replaced by Douglas DC-4s. Services to Hong Kong began around the same time.

In 1947 the airline took delivery of Lockheed L-749 Constellations and these took over the trunk route to London. Flying boats again entered the fleet from 1950, when the first of five Short Sandringham aircraft entered service for flights between the Rose Bay flying boat base on Sydney Harbour and destinations in New Caledonia, New Hebrides, Fiji, New Guinea (dubbed the "Bird of Paradise" route) and Lord Howe Island.

In 1952 Qantas expanded services across the Indian Ocean to Johannesburg via Perth, the Cocos Islands and Mauritius, calling this the Wallaby Route. Around this time, the British Government pressured Qantas to purchase the de Havilland Comet jet airliner, but Hudson Fysh was dubious about the economics of the aircraft and successfully resisted this. The network expanded across the Pacific to Vancouver via Auckland, Nadi, Honolulu and San Francisco in early 1954 when it took over the *Southern Cross Route* of British Commonwealth Pacific Airlines (BCPA).



QANTAS Super Constellation VH-EAM (Qantas Heritage Collection)



TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY Incorporated

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 04 SUMMER 2020

Hudson Fysh was knighted in 1953 and on 1st July 1955 relinquished his position as Managing Director (after 32 years) and continued as the Chairman of Qantas.

In September 1956 Qantas ordered the Boeing 707-138 jet airliner and the first was delivered in June 1959. This order made the airline the first customer for the type outside the US.

The first jet aircraft on the Australian register (and the 29th 707 built) was registered VH-EBA and named *City of Canberra*. This aircraft returned to Australia as VH-XBA in December 2006 for display in the Qantas Founders Outback Museum at Longreach, Queensland.



City of Canberra VH-EBA (Qantas Heritage Collection)

Air travel grew substantially in the early 1960s, so Qantas ordered the larger Boeing 707-338C series of aircraft.

In 1966 the airline diversified its business by opening the 450-room Wentworth Hotel in Sydney. The same year, Qantas placed early options on the new Concorde airliner but the orders were eventually cancelled. Also in 1966, the *Fiesta route* opened from Sydney to London via Fiji, Tahiti, Mexico City, Acapulco, Nassau and Bermuda. In September 1965 Qantas launched the first V-Jet service on the *Kangaroo Route*, via Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

In 1967 the airline placed orders for the Boeing 747. This aircraft could seat up to 350 passengers, a major improvement over the Boeing 707. Orders were placed for four aircraft with deliveries commencing in 1971. The later delivery date allowed Qantas to take



TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY Incorporated

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 04 SUMMER 2020

advantage of the -200B version, which better suited its requirements. Also, in 1967, Qantas Empire Airways changed its name to Qantas Airways, the name of the airline today.

The airline continued its expansion and development and today is recognised as one of the world's great airlines. In his trilogy, written on his career and development of QANTAS, Hudson Fysh remembers some startling facts in the airline's development.

From that August day in 1920, sitting around a glass top table in the Gresham Hotel Brisbane, four men dared to dream and made the decision to form the Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Service Ltd – "QANTAS".

The airline commenced operations in Longreach with a staff of three, Paul McGinness, Arthur Baird, Frank Corey (as a part time bookkeeper) and Hudson Fysh with a paid up capital of 6,037 pounds and two rickety aircraft. In mid-1966, on his retirement, QANTAS had 8,873 employees, nineteen Boeing 707 airliners and operated on 72,220 miles or globe encircling routes. In his last year of office, the airline produced \$4,030,183 of profit.

Sir William Hudson Fysh retired as Chairman of QANTAS on the 30th June 1966, after 46 years of service. He died, aged 74, on the 6th April 1979.

At Western Junction, "Hudson Fysh Drive" recognises the huge contribution made to commercial aviation by Launceston born Hudson Fysh. Next time you drive out of Launceston Airport, at the roundabout on Evandale Road, instead of turning north or south, drive straight through to Hudson Fysh Drive.



BOEING 787 – THE FUTURE OF QANTAS

Next Issue: Victor Holyman, and the birth of Tasmanian commercial aviation



Tasmanian Airports – A Brief History

Wynyard (Burnie) Airport

The first aerodrome at Wynyard was built by volunteers on an old racecourse. However, within a year of completion in 1932, the aerodrome was found to be too small for larger passenger and mail aircraft. A larger aerodrome was developed on the southern outskirts of the town and was officially opened on 26 February 1934. A further opening ceremony on 1st January 1935 was attended by the Prime Minister of the time, Joseph Lyons.

This early development is described in this [article](#) on our website.

In the mid-1970s, Federal policy was adopted that would eventually see the ownership and maintenance of all airports outside of capital cities transferred from the Commonwealth to the respective local authorities. Under the new scheme, the future of the Wynyard Aerodrome was cast into doubt after Federal funding was secured for upgrading the Devonport Airport in August 1980; few if any areas of regional Australia had two major commuter and cargo airports only 60 km apart, would Wynyard also be upgraded ? After much political controversy, it wasn't until March 1985 that Wynyard's future was assured when AU\$5.2 million was allocated by the State and Federal governments to upgrade the Wynyard aerodrome.

The upgraded aerodrome was officially opened on 15 February 1987, incorporating a sealed runway 1650 m long. Ownership had been transferred from the Commonwealth to the Burnie Port Authority and the Wynyard Aerodrome was renamed to Burnie Airport.

The Burnie Airport Corporation Unit Trust acquired the Burnie Airport from the Burnie Port Corporation in 2001. The Trust is 51% owned by the Burnie City Council and 49% owned by a private sector partner, the Australian Airports Association.

The airport is now the home of the Wynyard Aero Club that owns two large hangars whose space is rented out to members. The club provides flying training and active social activities for its members. Commercially the airport is serviced daily by REX Saabs to Melbourne and Sharp Airlines Metroliners from Launceston and Hobart to Wynyard, King and Flinders Island and Essendon.



Sharp Airlines Metroliner



TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY Incorporated

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 04 SUMMER 2020

Until early 2000, Burnie airport had the distinction of having a railway line across the runway.

The railway, running along Tasmania's north coast, was extended to Smithton in 1921. The line, running through Wynyard, was extensively used for haulage by the timber industry and to transport farm produce.

When the aerodrome at Wynyard was constructed, it was built on the only flat land in the area - the flood plain of the Inglis River with, Runway 05/23 being built over the railway line. There was a precedent for this: Sydney's Mascot airport also had a railway line crossing a runway in the early post-War years.



Wynyard Airport Railway Crossing

Prior to 1991, the rail crossing was controlled from the Wynyard Flight Service Unit (FSU). Perhaps because of the rail crossing, the Wynyard FSU was not subject to the general edict that FSUs should not overlook the movement area, and the Flight Service Officers had a good view over the airport.

When the Wynyard FSU was closed on 14 December 1990 as part of the programme of consolidation of Flight Service functions to the major Centres, the railway signalling function was also transferred to Melbourne. However, new consoles due to be installed in the Melbourne FSC in December 1991 did not have the signalling functionality, so an alternative was sought.



TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY Incorporated

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 04 SUMMER 2020

CAA Flying Operations Inspector Kevin Smith (himself formerly an Air Traffic Controller) suggested a system similar to that used in Gisborne, New Zealand, one of the few places in the world with a similar railway crossing. Such a system was designed and installed in 1992.

The signal system relied on banks of green 'vertical' (runway aligned) lights to indicate that the runway was clear for aircraft operations, and red horizontal lights to indicate that a train was approaching or on the runway.

The system detected approaching trains in sufficient time (approximately 50 seconds) for aircraft committed on approach to land safely or go around, or for aircraft taking off to continue the take-off safely. Trains approaching the detection zone faced a green signal until entering the detection zone when the signal changed momentarily to red. In the meantime, a signal was sent to the runway lights, changing the displayed array from green to red. When the system's internal checking confirmed that the runway signal lights had changed, the train signal would also change back to green.

Following a long decline in rail traffic, the north-west line through Wynyard was closed in early 2005 and the associated signal light system was decommissioned on 19 March that year, bringing to an end this unique air/rail crossing



REX Airlines SAAB



The unique signalling and communication system to safely operate aircraft and trains using the same runway at Wynyard.

Flashing red lights controlled the landings and takeoffs. The lights would begin flashing 5 minutes before the train was expected to cross the runway, and aircraft were prohibited to land during this time.

The three lights at top right of the railway signalling consolette, below, indicated, from left to right, that the runway was obstructed by a train, that the runway was clear of trains, and that a train was approaching. Flight Service could either warn approaching aircraft that a train was obstructing the runway, or stop the train by triggering a signal on the track. The two buttons either side of the brass ring at right bottom of the consolette are the emergency stop signal buttons for the railway and the runway.





Photos and History from the Archives



Aircraft parked on “the beach” at Lake Pedder. This area was a huge sandy expanse that provided a safe landing area for the lucky few who flew into Lake Pedder prior to it’s flooding.

Did you know?

- On 18 March 1910 American escapologist Harry Houdini made the first powered “heavier than air” flight in Australia after completing three flights in a Voisin biplane at Diggers Rest, Victoria. On 16 July 1910 John Robertson Duigan (born 1882) constructed and flew the first powered Australian built aircraft in the country. At the time Duigan was a 28 year old farmer from Mia Mia, Victoria who had never seen an aircraft.
- On 12 November 1914 the first graduates emerged from the Central Flying School course at Point Cook, which enabled the operation of the Australian Flying Corps (AFC) during World War 1.
- On 15 May 1928 Rev John Flynn began the Aerial Medical Service (AMS) operating from Cloncurry. Its first aircraft was a DH - 50A. In 1952 thje AMS was renamed Flying Doctor Service and in 1955 became the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS).



Photos and History from the Archives.



Ansett-ANA F27 Friendship at Western Junction (Launceston Airport) on 27 March 1965 following an engine malfunction on final approach.

Fortunately, there were no fatalities although the aircraft was effectively destroyed.

Did you know?

- In 1961 Australia became the first country to make it mandatory to fit a black box to each aircraft. The “black box” was invented by Darren Warren who was educated at Launceston Church Grammar School.
- In 1974, following cyclone Tracey, Qantas established a world record by evacuating 673 passengers on one of its flights from Darwin.
- On 18 August 1989 the Australian Federation of Air Pilots (AFAP) embarked on an industrial campaign in support of a 29.47% pay claim. AFAP pilots made themselves available for flying duties only within the normal office hours of 9am to 5pm, precipitating one of the worst and most expensive industrial disputes in Australia’s history.



Photos and History from the Archives



**Douglas DC 4 and DC 3 with the Holyman Hangar (Hangar 17) in the background
Launceston Airport in the 1950's. (Tasmanian State Archives).**

The DC3 in the foreground is VH-TAW, which was entered on the Australian aircraft register in May 1951 by TAA and was then re-registered as VH-SBE in 1960.

Did you know?

- On 9 February 1946 Australian National Airways' (ANA) first DC-4, 'Amana', was delivered to Melbourne from San Francisco.
- On 29 June 1949 the RAAF's first Australian built jet, the DHA Vampire F-30, was flight tested at Bankstown NSW. The first of these home-built Vampires was delivered to the RAAF on 26 September.



Tasmanian Aviation Anniversaries

Here are some significant anniversaries in Tasmanian Aviation

- **23rd November 2020** – the 90th Anniversary of the first flight off the newly established Western Junction Aerodrome by Captain J Francis in the Australian Aero Club (Tasmanian Section) Gipsy Moth VH-ULM
- **28th February 2021** - the 90th Anniversary of the official opening of Western Junction Aerodrome

The 90th Anniversary of the first flight off Western Junction by VH-ULM was commemorated with an event at the Aero Club. This flight was the beginning of flying operations for the Club, which was the catalyst for the development of private and commercial aviation in Tasmania.

Extensive local media coverage was coordinated by Lindsay Millar, which included video of the restored VH-ULM flying in Queensland.



The restored VH-ULM flying in Queensland, in the Aero Club colours



“Miss Flinders” – The Continuing Story

The Desoutter Comes to Tasmania

Recap

In the last [article](#), the Desoutter G-ABOM was flown from London to Essendon by Harold Jenkins and Harold Jeffrey, arriving on 18th February 1932. Upon arriving in Essendon, they sold the plane to Hart Aircraft Services, who were the Australian agents of Desoutter.

An interesting side story is that Jenkins and Jeffrey piloted the second flight of a Desoutter from England to Australia. A year earlier, two New Zealand Pilots, Piper and Kay had flown from London to Sydney in a Mark I Desoutter. Their story is available [here](#).

Commercial Tasmanian Aviation in 1932

Aerodromes or landing strips which had been certified by the Civil Aviation Department could be used for passenger aviation services.

When Western Junction aerodrome at Launceston was completed and certified in late 1930, (it was officially opened in February 1931), then the opportunity for commercial passenger aviation to fly to Tasmania was available.

(The first) Australian National Airways ANA operated by Charles Kingsford Smith and Charles Ulm, operated the Brisbane – Sydney – Melbourne route in 1930 using the Avro X monoplanes. ANA extended their operation to include the Melbourne to Launceston route from January 1931. ANA operated this route, and extended the service to Brighton in the south, until the end of June 1931 when the company's financial problems forced the flights to stop.

Another of the early commercial aviation companies that was operating in Tasmania was Mathews Aviation. Based at Essendon, its founder, Captain Mathews wanted to start a service between the mainland and Tasmania. (They did operate a flying boat for a short time).

The Australian Aero Club (Tasmanian Section) employed Mathews Aviation staff to maintain their planes and train pilots. The Tasmanian Manager of Mathews Aviation was Laurence McKenzie Johnson, who was an experienced pilot. L. M. Johnson was based at Western Junction from late 1930.

In November 1931, the Flinders Island Council commenced the clearing of a landing strip at Whitemark, which was licenced for commercial flights in March 1932.

With the activity on establishing the Flinders Island aerodrome, L. M. Johnson decided to start a passenger flight service between Western Junction and Flinders Island.



VH-UEE Comes to Tasmania

L. M Johnson purchased the newly registered VH-UEE on the 9th of March 1932, flew the plane to Western Junction on the 15th, and commenced a bi-weekly service on the 19th of March. The fare for the trip was £2 10s (\$250 today).

The value of having a plane available in for medical evacuations was immediately shown on the 21st of March 1932, when a patient was flown from Whitemark back to Western Junction. (See below).

A reporter from the Local newspaper "The Examiner" flew in VH-UEE on the return flight from Western Junction to Whitemark in May 1932 and described the trip in this [article](#).

The biweekly service, normally leaving Western Junction at 9.00 a.m., arriving at Whitemark at 10.45, departing at 11.00 a.m. and arriving back at Western Junction at 12.15 p.m.

Miss Flinders was also available for charter flights.



Commercial Aviation.—The de Soutter monoplane which is used by Mr. L. M. Johnson in the Launceston-Flinders Island air service. This picture was taken during a recent trip to Melbourne by Mr. Johnson.

VH-UEE Flying over Melbourne (Weekly Courier - 07 July 1932)



Holyman Brothers and Tasmanian Aerial Services

Victor and Ivan Holyman formed Holyman Brothers Pty Ltd and establish an airline to also provide passengers services within Tasmania. On the 30th of September 1932, Captain Victor Holyman flew the inaugural flight on their service between Western Junction and Flinders Island in the DH 83 Fox Moth (VH-UQM), "Miss Currie".

On the 13th of October 1932, just two weeks after the Holyman commenced flying, a new Company, Tasmanian Aerial Services was formed by merging the operation of L.M. Johnson and the Holyman Brothers, using Miss Flinders and Miss Currie.

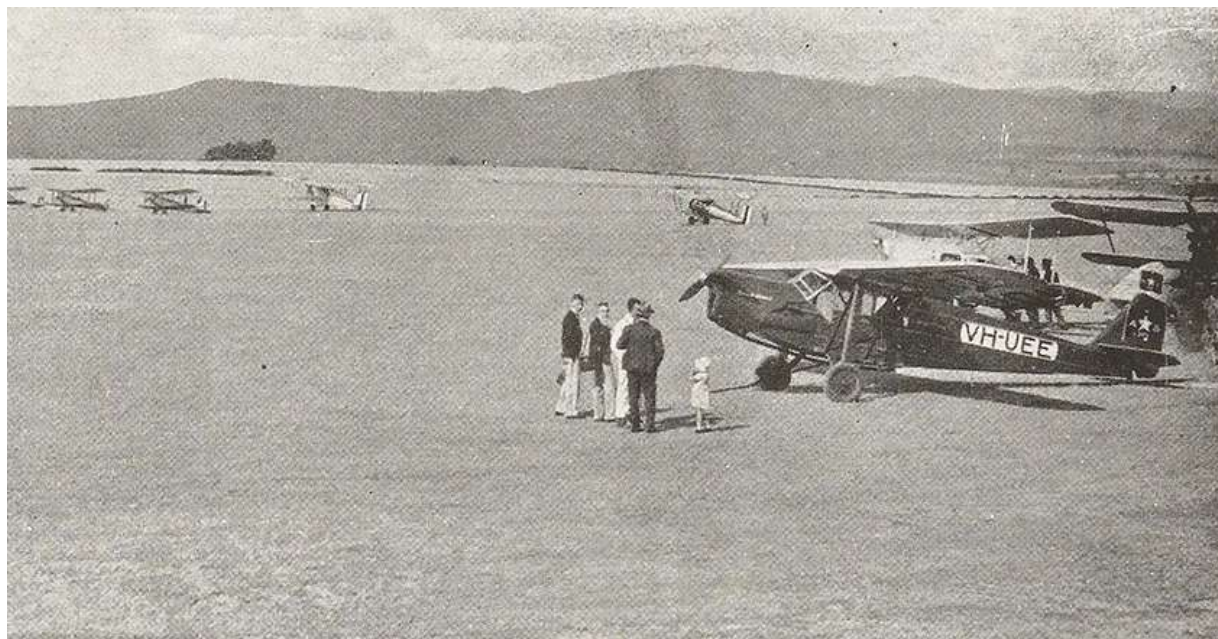
The Tasmanian routes expanded with services to Brighton, La Trobe, Wynyard and King Island later in 1932.

The two planes were named "Miss Flinders" and "Miss Currie") in October 1932.

In July 1934, Tasmanian Aerial Services was renamed as Holyman's Airways after L.M. Johnson left the company.

The story of the Holyman Brothers, L.M. Johnson, Tasmanian Aerial Services, Holyman's Airways and then (the second) Australian National Airways will be told in more detail in later articles.

Miss Flinders was used routinely on flights between Western Junction, the other northern aerodromes and Flinders and King Island. It was also used on the Western Junction to Hobart service.



**Miss Flinders, with Miss Currie behind, at the Western Junction Air Pageant 1934
(Weekly Courier 04 March 1934)**



Aeromedical Evacuations

Before the Royal Flying Doctor Service was operational in Tasmania, the commercial airlines often undertook flights to assist in medical emergencies. Here are two examples involving Miss Flinders.

Evacuation from Flinders Island: March 1932

At 7 p.m. on the 20th of March 1932, only 6 days after arriving in Tasmania, L. M. Johnson received an urgent telegram from Dr. Connell, of Flinders Island, that his patient, Mr. Alfred Cook was in urgent need of an operation in Launceston.

At daybreak, Miss Flinders left Western Junction and flew through heavy rain and bad visibility, arriving at Whitemark after a flight time of the 1hr 15min.

Mr. Cook was taken to the Whitemark aerodrome on an improvised stretcher, and placed in the plane, it being big enough for the patient to lie at full length at the floor of the plane.

Mr. Johnson left Whitemark at 9.20 a.m. and after piloting the machine through some very heavy weather, arrived at Western Junction at 11 a.m. The Launceston city ambulance was waiting on the field and Mr. Cook was rushed into the Launceston Public Hospital for the operation.

“The Examiner” reported on the views of the patient:

Before he left the aerodrome Mr. Cook was asked his opinion of the trip. In spite of the pain he was suffering, he had nothing but praise for the pilot, who had handled the machine during the difficult journey, in the course of which they had flown through numerous rain ' storms and squalls. Mr. Cook also stated that he was very interested in seeing from the air the islands that he knows so well.

Evacuation from King Island: February 1933

On Sunday the 26th of February 1933 (immediately after the third air pageant held at Western Junction the previous day), Capt. V. C. Holyman of Tasmanian Aerial Services, received an urgent message from King Island on that a man was in a critical condition and that it was necessary for him to go to Melbourne for an immediate operation.

In answering this call, L. M. Johnson departed Western Junction at 5 a.m. on the Monday and flew to King Island in Miss Flinders, arriving at 5.30 a.m. After picking up the man, he then flew to Essendon, arriving at 10.30 a.m.

Upon arrival at Essendon, he flew to Yarrum in Gippsland to visit his father, Mr B. P. Johnson who was a Solicitor in the town. The following day, Miss Flinders returned to Western Junction, flying directly, taking 2 hours 20 minutes, with Mr Johnson senior and daughter Enid as passengers.



“Firsts” involving Miss Flinders

The first night flight over Launceston was carried out by Miss Flinders and L. M. Johnson on 01 May 1932. Six electric lights were placed on either side of the plane with a 12 volt accumulator in the body of the plane. The flight was made just after 8.30 pm. and was about 20 miles in duration.

Miss Flinders, piloted by L. M. Johnson was the first plane to land on Cape Barron Island on the 6th of October 1933. A landing field had just been cleared on the island and during a routine trip between Flinders Island and Western Junction, the plane diverted and landed on Cape Barron. As well as providing the opportunity for general aviation, the landing strip provided an additional landing strip for planes to use in an emergency for planes flying across Bass Strait

Miss Flinders is Sold

By the mid-1930s, commercial aviation was moving ahead quickly with bigger planes being available.

Tasmanian Aerial Services purchased its first De Havilland DH 84 Dragon “Miss Launceston” in August 1933. This plane could carry six passengers and a pilot.

In June 1935, the usefulness of Miss Flinders to Holyman’s Airways was limited with the bigger passenger planes now available, and so was sold to De Havilland and departed on its delivery flight to Sydney on 11 June 1935.

In the next newsletter, the mainland story of Miss Flinders.

Did you know?

- On 3 August 1952 Lieutenant W.H. Scott test-flew the first CAC Avon engined Sabre at Avalon. The first sonic boom was heard on 14 August when Scott dived the aircraft, breaking the sound barrier.
- In October 1956 QANTAS carried the Olympic flame from Athens to Australia for the start of the Melbourne Olympic Games.



We have all heard the on-board announcements made by the flight attendants. Some of us have heard them so many times we could recite them “but” in the USA flight attendants have their own way of getting your attention. Allegedly these are actual announcements.

- Please take care when opening the overhead compartments because, after a landing like that, we’re sure as hell everything has shifted.
- “Following a somewhat firm landing” - Please remain seated until Captain Crash and his crew taxi what’s left of the aircraft to the gate. Once there please feel free to pick your way through the wreckage to the terminal.
- Weather at our destination is 50 degrees with some broken clouds, but we will try to have them fixed before our arrival.
- As you exit the plane, make sure to gather all of your belongings. Anything left behind will be distributed evenly amongst the flight attendants. Please do not leave children or spouses.
- We would like to thank you folks for flying with us today. The next time you feel inclined to go blasting through the skies in a pressurised aluminium tube we hope you will think of United Airlines.
- Your seat cushions can be used for floatation; and in the event of an emergency water landing, please paddle to shore and take them with our compliments.



Mysteries of Aviation

Beech Aircraft Corporation E55 VH-WMD

The pilot owned a property at Killiecrankie on Flinders Island and had landed his aircraft on several occasions at the Killiecrankie airstrip but as far as can be determined he had never landed at Killiecrankie at night.

On the afternoon of April 21, 1996, the pilot submitted an IFR flight plan in VH-WMD for a flight from Bankstown to Killiecrankie. The plan showed the flight would proceed to Flinders Island under IFR procedures thence to Killiecrankie under Night VMC Rules coastal at 1000 feet.



A Beech Aircraft Corporation E55 similar to that of VH-WMD

The aircraft was fitted with two ADF's, two VOR's, a Trimble TNL 2000 GPS and an ELT emergency beacon.

The planned flight time was 154 minutes and the aircraft's total fuel endurance was shown as 330 minutes.

Prior to departure the pilot obtained NOTAMS and met forecasts. The amended Flinders Island terminal forecast predicted 2 octas of stratus cloud at 2500 feet and 6 octas of altocumulus at 12,000 feet. The forecast also predicted intermittent periods between 5pm and 9 pm local time when the visibility would be 6,000 metres in rain showers with 5 octas of stratus at 1200 feet.



Departure airport Bankstown NSW

The aircraft departed Bankstown at 1732 with the pilot giving normal position reports enroute. At 1950 the pilot advised Melbourne Centre that his position was 25NM from Killiecrankie. At 1957 he contacted the crew of another aircraft about to land at Flinders Island, stating WMD was 20NM north of Flinders Island, in cloud, leaving 5,000ft and proceeding to Killiecrankie, at the northern end of the island. The pilot of WMD then told the other aircraft crew that if he was not visual at Flinders Island, he would conduct an instrument letdown to circling height and then proceed night VFR north.

In response to a request from Melbourne Centre at 1957, the pilot said he would make an operations-normal call by 2020. At 2000 the pilot stated he was not visual and would make another ops-normal call at 2045. No other calls were received from the pilot. Melbourne Centre commenced calling WMD at 2045. These calls were continued and checks were made with a person living near Killiecrankie airstrip. This person advised he had seen a sustained flash of light at about 2030, towards the north. The distress phase of search-and-rescue procedures was declared at 2100 and search action commenced.

An air search was continued until the evening of the 24 April 1996. During this time, a few pieces of wreckage were found either on or close to the north-western shore of the island, mainly between Killiecrankie and Stanley Point. Police continued a ground search for several more days. The main wreckage was not found.



TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY Incorporated

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 04 SUMMER 2020

The items of aircraft wreckage found included one front seat, a sun visor, lining from the roof, and a front seat belt. Inspection of these items established they were from a Beech Baron aircraft but definite identification of the registration of the aircraft they were fitted to could not be determined.

The pilot of an aircraft which landed at Flinders Island at the time WMD was in the vicinity, reported there were 3-4 octas of cloud at 2000 feet. He also reported that it was not raining.

Witnesses indicated that it was a very dark night. The moon had set at 1951, which was 30 minutes before the last call received from the pilot. The phase of the moon was such that prior to moonset only a small portion of the moon surface was illuminated. (13 percent).

Since obtaining his licence in 1967, the pilot had been the subject of many air safety incident reports. As a result, he was required on occasions to undergo flight tests. He failed several of these tests, but later past re-tests. He currently held a command instrument rating which was valid until January 1997.

The strip at Killiecrankie was equipped with a set of runway lights that could be activated by a series of coded radio transmissions from an aircraft VHF radio. The lights were capable of normal operation. When turned on, the lights remained on for approximately 30 minutes. The lights were not activated at or after the time of which the flash of light was seen.



Killiecrankie airstrip Flinders Island, the proposed destination of VH-WMD. The airstrip is 1300 metres in length, sandy based and is aligned 09/27. It has no navigational aids.



TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY Incorporated

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 04 SUMMER 2020

The few pieces of wreckage found could not be positively identified as coming from WMD. However, they were from a Beech Baron type aircraft and it is considered that they were from WMD. The damage to the pieces found indicate the aircraft had been subjected to significant impact forces. Their general location indicated the main wreckage is probably in the sea near the north west coast of Flinders Island.

The actual flight path the pilot intended to follow after leaving Flinders Island is uncertain. The direct line distance from Flinders Island to Killiecrankie airstrip is about 16 NM. On the flight plan the pilot indicated the distance as 48 NM, the expected ground speed as 165 knots and planned time interval of 18 minutes three times longer than for a direct track to Killiecrankie.

A further anomaly in the pilot's flight planning is that he indicated he was proceeding coastal, night VFR, at 1000 feet. The general interpretation of coastal is that it indicates the intention to fly along or close to the coast, commonly within 1km. The pilot could not have done this at 1000 feet without operating below the lowest safe altitude.

The very dark conditions would have made it almost impossible to navigate by visual reference to the ground. Also, the dark conditions would have made flying by reference to external visual clues relatively difficult and in turn would have created orientation problems for the pilot.

Even so, in the absence of direct evidence, the reason for the aircraft not reaching the intended destination is unknown.



Sixty Years – A tribute to the Tasmanian Division of the Royal Flying Doctor Service



Royal Flying Doctor Service TASMANIA

At a
RFDS national council meeting in Melbourne approval was granted for the formation of the
Tasmanian Section of the service to begin on September 12, 1960.

Two days later on September 14, 1960 Brian Scanlon and pilot Peter Tanner, boarded their Cessna 182 in Hobart and flew to Queenstown to retrieve the local doctor, who had succumbed to appendicitis, safely returning to Hobart and medical attention.

On September 19 the Tas Aero Club CFI, Neil Beattie, flew a SAAB Safir out of Launceston for a night time extraction of a patient from Flinders Island and so the Tasmanian Division of the RFDS became operational.

In their first twelve months of operation the RFDS Tasmania made 137 flights now 60 years later they operate in excess of 2300 flights annually from Launceston Airport throughout Tasmania, the Bass Strait Islands and the Australian mainland.

Over the last 60 years the RFDS has become an integral part of Tasmania's health services.

The aeromedical service, operating a state-of-the-art Beech King Air aircraft and manned by highly trained and professional pilots, ambulance staff and engineers, operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week in all weather conditions to ensure safe and speedy evacuation of injured and ill patients Tasmania wide. Many a Bass Strait Islander owe their lives to the professionalism of the aircraft's crews.

Whilst the history of the RFDS is wrapped up in aeromedical work the focus of the service has diversified to enable improved health outcomes for people living in rural and remote areas. Done through the delivery of mental health, wellbeing and exercise programs the team supports and educates people to have a better understanding of their chronic health conditions so they may self-manage their conditions and reduce hospitalization.



TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY Incorporated

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 04 SUMMER 2020



The Beech Craft King Air aircraft utilized in aeromedical extractions in front of the RFDS hangar Launceston Airport.

In July of this year two former public transport buses that were donated by the Tasmanian Government and transferred into mobile health clinics with a Commonwealth Government grant and funds raised by Rotary Tasmania was handed over allowing the RFDS to embed its primary health care in more remote and rural areas.

During the past year the RFDS mobile dental care team has expanded its services to the East Coast of Tasmania at Swansea, and to the Bass Strait Island communities of Flinders and King Island. The significance of this service is indicated by the requests for appointment with the dental team with 1191 patients seen over 2581 visits in the past year.

With support, the RFDS deliver an education program for primary school students designed to educate and raise awareness and understanding of the RFDS by teaching staff, students and their parents whilst making available a funding program for important research to advance the long-term health of Tasmanians.

Whilst 2020 was set for celebration, with events already held in February, the pandemic arrived, in the words of John Kirwan CEO of RFDS Tasmania, and hit like a tsunami. Not to be overwhelmed a Business Continuity and Risk Management Plan was instigated and they are looking forward to the implementation of a Risk Management Recovery Plan.

With optimism the RFDS is planning to re-start their 60th celebrations and continue them into 2021. In the words of John Kirwan *"while isolation is not new to many of our communities, patients and clients, the current pandemic restrictions and pressures add a new dimension, and reinforce the need for our outreach services."*

Check out the [Live Flight Map](#), which shows all the RFD flights currently underway in Australia:



AIRLINE PILOT? It's a great job, in a great office with a great everchanging view "BUT" there are rules they have to follow:

HERE ARE JUST A FEW

- Every take off is optional the remainder is mandatory.
- A "good" landing is one you can walk away from. A "great" landing is one they can use the plane again.
- You know when you have landed with the wheels up. It takes full power to taxi to the gate.
- Stay out of clouds. The silver lining everybody keeps talking about may contain another plane going in the opposite direction. Mountains have also been known to live in clouds.
- When in doubt hold on to your altitude. Nobody has ever collided with the sky.
- The four most useless things for a pilot are the sky above, the runway behind him, the air in his fuel tank and the decision he should have made a tenth of a second ago.
- And remember "*there are old pilots and there are bold pilots*" but there are very few "*old bold pilots*".
- If all you can see out the window is the ground going round and round and all you can hear is screams from the passenger compartment things are not at all as they should be.



Do You Remember?

What Airline Meals Used to Be Like

When flying, either domestically or internationally, we have all experienced in-flight meals some of which were excellent and some...well !!!!!!!!!!!

In defence of our airlines lets look at the development on the early days of in-flight catering, that challenged the airlines to become highly competitive and innovative with what they served.

The first airline meals—pre-packed, cold lunch boxes that were priced at three shillings each—were served in October 1918 on a Handley-Page flight from London to Paris. Four years later, Daimler Airway (which later became part of British Airways), tasked a steward with greeting boarding passengers with glasses of fruit juice.



Very early days - Lufthansa 1928

In 1936, United Airlines introduced the “world’s first flight kitchen,” as in a kitchen that was owned and operated by the airline to produce inflight food. At the kitchen in Oakland, California, United employees prepared hot meals while also giving special attention to the effects of altitude on the taste of food. These first meals served included a choice of fried chicken or scrambled eggs. Frozen food was originally developed to be served to troops on long flights during World War II, but it was not actually available to the public until the war was over. However, TWA took steps toward commercializing this method of food preparation. According to a timeline from the TWA Museum in Kansas City, Missouri, the



airline was the first “to develop and use a quick-frozen, pre-cooked method of food preparation, packaging, and shipping, for in-flight meal service.”



In Flight Meals Circa 1950

TWA staff experimented “with the degree to which meats and vegetables should be separately cooked before placing them in the trays, the percentage of water in stocks so they would be tasty at high altitude, and made the first systematic study of how spices were perceived at high altitude.”

Fine dining aboard The Clipper. From the late 1930s through the 1950s, dubbed the Flying Boat Era, the Clipper carried out early trans-oceanic flights for Pan Am. The onboard inflight dining service was just as romantic as the journey. Uniformed attendants served refined meals in a dining room with tables adorned.

with fine china and formal place settings. For example, a “Bermuda Clipper” menu from Pan Am Museum at the Cradle of Aviation Museum in Garden City, New York, listed incredible meal offerings served on this flight to Bermuda flying from New York and Baltimore. The menu’s dishes encompassed consommé julienne, broiled double French lamb chops, fresh string beans with parsley potatoes, and a Belgian endive salad. Hard to believe now, but flying used to be quite glamorous.



A Parisian influence Pan Am was the epitome of luxury in air travel. From the 50s through the 60s, the airline had a culinary partnership with Maxim's, a renowned restaurant in Paris. Not only did this French bistro develop the menus for all Pan Am flights, but they also cultivated a Presidential Special service given to first-class passengers. Introduced on the Boeing 377 Stratocruiser, passengers in Pan Am's first-class cabin enjoyed onboard specialties, starting with presenting hot hors d'oeuvres during cocktail hour. The meal's pièce de résistance was the main course with gourmet selections including filet mignon, roast duckling bigarade, lobster "Américaine" or rock cornish game hen. Even without multi-course dining on planes today, it's important to follow these etiquette rules on board.

The flight of the Concorde in the 70s, inflight meal service also reached new heights with the arrival of the Concorde, operated by British Airways and Air France, which made its first superfast transcontinental flight in September 1973. Passengers on the Concorde famously drank Champagne while indulging in caviar. When Concorde ceased flying in 2003, its final onboard menu items included truffles, foie gras, and lobster.

Emirates today hold the distinction of having the world's largest flight catering facility. Located at Dubai Investment Park in the United Arab Emirates, produces an average of 225,000 meals per day and more than 82 million per year. Its team of chefs is comprised of employees of 69 different nationalities who are experienced in every culinary tradition, from preparing sushi for Japanese routes to cooking regional curries for flights to India and beyond.



Farm freshness near the airport. In 2019, Singapore Airlines launched its first Farm-To-Plane partnership with AeroFarms, an indoor vertical farming company based in New Jersey to provide a custom blend of fresh-from-the-farm produce to serve on flights to Singapore, from airports in the New York City region. AeroFarms uses a reclaimed abandoned steel mill in an industrial area near Newark, New Jersey that it turned into a one-acre indoor vertical farm. The farm can produce the equivalent of 390 acres of locally grown produce with up to 30 harvests each year.



And Today!

So, the next time you are waiting on your inflight meal or snack “remember” the 3 shillings boxed lunch served on the old Handley- Page aircraft that started it all.



Help Solve the Secret

This issue we introduce a new segment entitled "*Help solve the secret*". The object of this segment is to introduce to our readers articles, photos and/or occurrences that occurred in the past and are still awaiting an explanation and as such we seek your comments or enlightenment. Who knows we may have even discovered part of your family history.

Secret Number 1: Airmail Letter from Launceston to UK

The first article is presented by founding TAHS member and resident historian Lindsay Millar who has come across an envelope that is addressed to Mrs C Hope, Cheshire, England from a Miss Quon who it is assumed is from Launceston.

The historical significance is that the letter was carried as airmail on the first flight from Australia to England in November 1931.

Help us Solve the Secret:

- We don't know the significance of the letter, the relationship between Miss Quon in Launceston and Mrs Hope in the UK?
- How the envelope managed to return to Australia?
- May be somebody's friends in England can help?





TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY Incorporated

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 04 SUMMER 2020



*So now it's up to you! Just email or drop us a note with your information that, with your permission, will be published in the next newsletter and help us to **"Solve the secret"***



TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY Incorporated

NEWSLETTER ISSUE 04 SUMMER 2020

***FROM ALL AT TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL
SOCIETY***

***HAVE A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A SAFE AND
PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY***



“SEE YOU IN 2021”