



TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY Incorporated

NEWSLETTER    ISSUE 09    AUTUMN 2022

# “MISS FLINDERS”



## HOME AGAIN AND ON DISPLAY AT LAUNCESTON AIRPORT



## **EDITORIAL**

Welcome to edition number nine, the first of the Tasmanian Aviation Historical Society (TAHS) Newsletters for 2022.

As you can see from the cover page, this year's first newsletter celebrates the completion of our first major project. In conjunction with the Launceston Airport and the untiring efforts of our president Andrew Johnson, "Miss Flinders" has been returned to her original Tasmanian home. The project was completed in December when the plane was elevated for display. When in Launceston, take a trip out to the airport and view the aircraft that helped write Tasmanian and Australian aviation history. Also check out our special Tribute to "Miss Flinders" [Newsletter](#).

The society is planning several activities and events this year, including the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of "Miss Currie" in Tasmania in September. Also, in partnership with the Flinders Island Furneaux Museum, we are developing a display featuring the development of commercial aviation between Tasmania and Flinders Island. More in future publications.

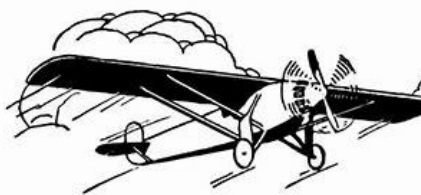
Please enjoy these articles and contact us should you have queries, information, historical snippets (both Tasmanian and National) or further comment.

Wayne Dearing,

Newsletter Editor

Included in this edition:

- President's Annual Report
- Tasmanian Aviation Giants - The Holyman Family and ANA Part 5
- Matthews Aviation Bass Strait Service to Tasmania
- Believe it or not!! – Tasmanian and Bass Strait Mysteries
- Leviathans from the past – Junkers G 38
- Demons Over Waratah
- Australian aviation snippets and history
- The Classified section





## **PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT**

After the enormous effort to re assemble *Miss Flinders* in the departure lounge of Launceston Airport, work continued during the year to ensure she was displayed safely in an elevated position. Perched three and half meters off the ground, the aircraft now provides a powerful reminder of pioneering aviation history in Tasmania. Her story and significant contribution in the early 1930's are again being shared with an audience. A great result and a big tick with goals of the Society to recognise, document and promote the aviation history of Tasmania.

Launceston Airport's 90th anniversary event provided some positive marketing for TAHS through television, radio and print. A supportive contact was also established with the Minister for Transport, Michael Ferguson. His department have been a major financial contributor to the costs of elevating the aircraft. I am pleased to say the partnership established with the Launceston Airport continues with ongoing discussions for further historic supportive opportunities.

This year has seen a small dedicated group continue in the development of Museum best practice with the help of the Roving Curator's program. Having developed the TAHS Collection Management Plan an Interpretation Plan has now also been produced. This is another key document in the TAHS administration which will guide the society over the next five years and beyond in the way we promote our collection and the associated stories.

Complimenting the Roving Curator time was funding from a successful grant application with Cultural Heritage Grants to refine our logo and develop the TAHS branding and style guide. The result has produced a professional looking brand for the society which will help lift all our correspondence and marketing to higher standard.

Our association with the Roving Curator program will continue in 2022 with additional sessions to develop an exhibition in partnership with the Furneaux Museum. This is an exciting opportunity to share the large amount of research already done into pioneering aviation in Bass Strait.

Further promotion of the society this year was achieved with an evening of talks taking part at the Launceston RSL. The evening proved a great opportunity to share current aviation research and the stories discovered. It was good to see a mixture of familiar and new faces at the event. This we hope will form the beginning of similar events including talks to a range of interested groups.

Newsletters produced quarterly have continued to be an enjoyable and informative read, covering a broad range of aviation related topics. The volume of content is undeniably generous with a great deal of research going into the stories delivered. A huge thank you all contributors.

The depth of our website has continued to grow offering a valuable resource on all aviation history in Tasmania. The introduction of purchasing through the website is an initiative that is proving useful. It has been good to see the TAHS Facebook presence has ramped up this year with regular postings.





## **TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY Incorporated**

### **NEWSLETTER    ISSUE 09    AUTUMN 2022**

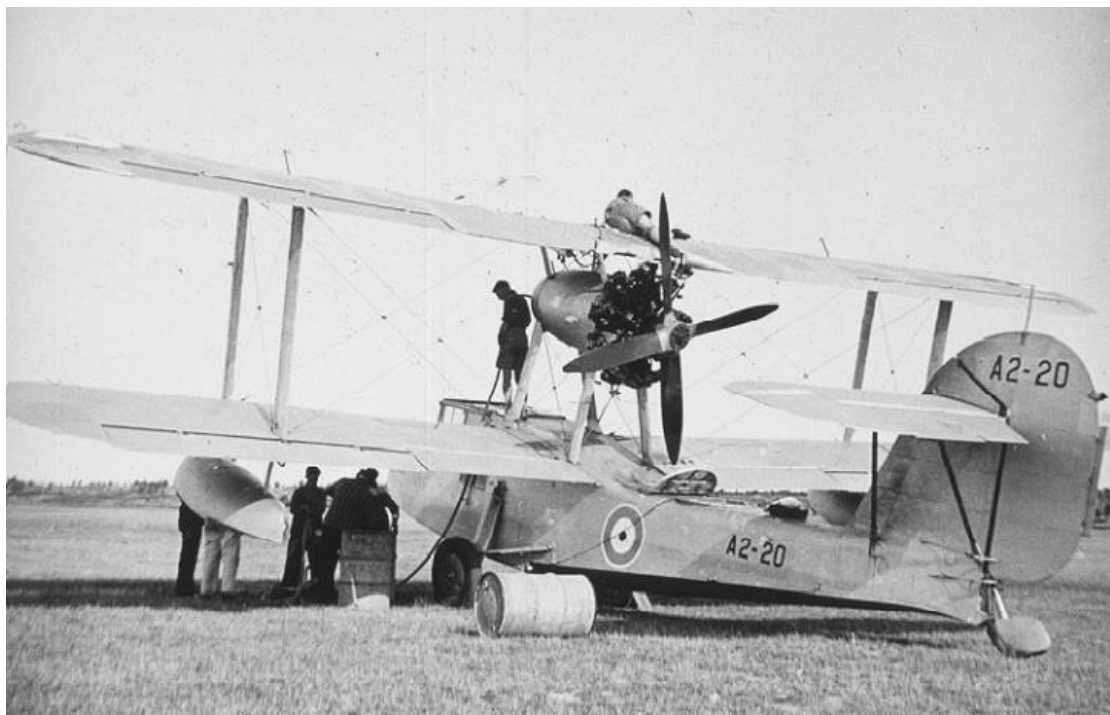
I am pleased that our membership continues to grow from around Tasmania and interstate. The financial contribution and interest is crucial so I would like to acknowledge all members for their support in developing this small but critical historical society.

I would also like to acknowledge our supporters in particular the Launceston Distillery for sharing Hangar 17 and allowing TAHS to conduct meetings and store a growing number of aviation objects.

1932 was a significant year for aviation milestones in Tasmania so I am looking forward to a string of 90th anniversaries in 2022!

Regards,

Andrew Johnson – President



**RAAF Supermarine Seagull V refuelling on Flinders Island**



## **Tasmanian Aviation Giants – The Holyman Family**

### **Part 5 – Flying for ANA, Innovations, New Ventures and the End of an Airline**

*By W. Dearing*

At the end of the Second World War, ANA was the major domestic airline. The Federal Government then establishing TAA in 1946 as a direct competitor. The post-war expansion of aircraft travel, in a tough commercial environment, placed a lot of strain on the operation of ANA. With the death of Sir Ivan Holyman in 1957, ANA had lost its leader and ANA was subsequently sold.

This is our final article in the series on the Holyman Family.



#### **Flying for ANA**

At the end of the Second World War, ANA employed 65 pilots, which had risen to 300 by the late 1940s. After the rapid growth of the company during its first ten years, the insecurity caused by the rise of TAA and the assault on the company by the Chifley Government had a greater impact on the pilots than any other group of ANA's workforce.

The concern over the future of the company was compounded by the fact that most pilots were young married men who wanted continuity in their employment. It was not surprising that with ANA entering a lengthy period of uncertainty, that pilots were tempted to gain more secure employment with TAA, Qantas, or even overseas airlines like Cathay Pacific and Swissair.

The constant drain of pilots meant ANA was continually recruiting and training new pilots through the 1950s. Although there was constant turnover of pilots at the junior level, the experience of the airline's senior pilot's ranks was probably greater than any airline in the world. ANA Management showed great consideration to long serving pilots who found it difficult to adapt to the changing requirements of airline flying during the late 1940s and early 1950s, many of whom were moved sideways to some of the company's plum ground jobs.

With the new bigger planes that operated after the War, the role of the pilot was restricted to time in the cockpit. Nonetheless the old style still lived on to some extent in the DC-3 services to the outback. With the DC-3s flying slow and low, the pilots would often perform many a detour for passengers to enjoy the sights. Due to the intimate nature of this aircraft



the airline's instructions to the captain was "to go back and chat to the passengers during the flight" meaning the pilots were involved with the passengers far more than they are today.



**File photo of the iconic ANA DC 3 VH – ANH Tulluna**

### **Innovations**

ANA always prided itself on its role as an aviation pioneer. (Some of these achievements are listed at the end of the article).

This enthusiasm for innovation remained strong throughout the life of ANA as they pioneered many new systems and methods, particularly in the field of air freight.

Freight became a major part of ANA's culture and was particularly strong in Tasmania, where the absence of road competition and frequent industrial disruption to sea transport placed air freight in a very favourable position.



**Australian National Airways Freighter Service Van**

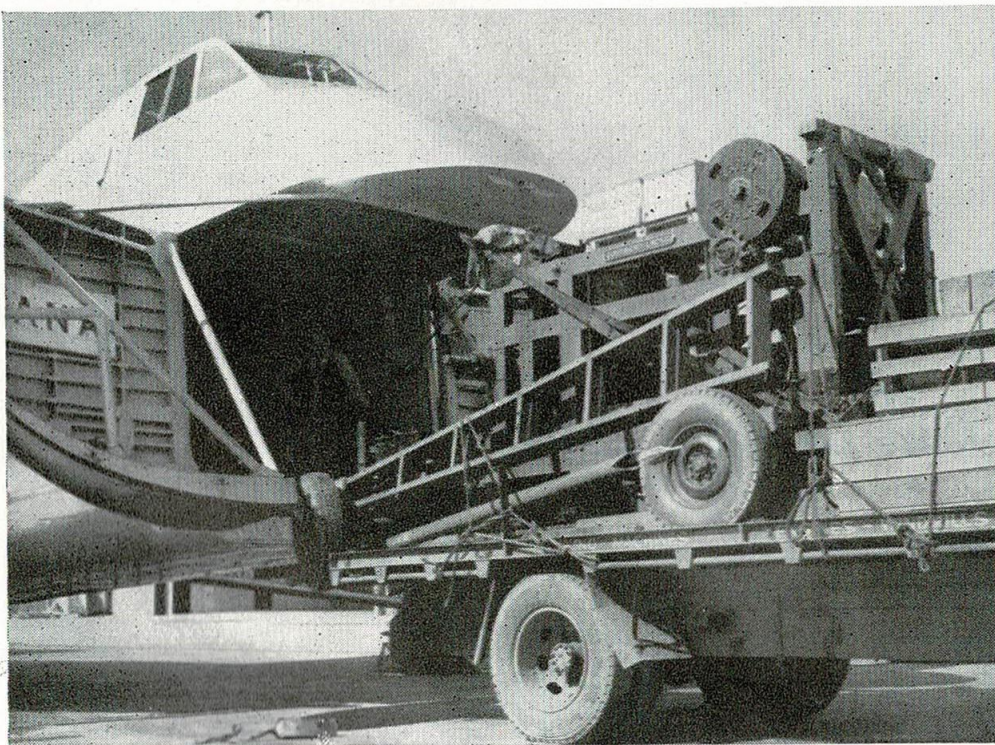
Launceston freight supervisor, and later airport manager, Ron Roach recalls that freight became an enormous business for ANA in Tasmania. The airline worked closely with the textile industry and filled the Launceston hangars with wool bales and wool from Coats Patons, blankets from Waverly Woollen Mills and goods from other textile businesses in Launceston. In the mid 1950's Coats Patons was sending up to 200,000 cartons of wool to the mainland annually.





But the freight business didn't stop there. Their innovative attitude resulted in the construction of special pens and facilities that enabled the airline to carry horses, sheep, and cattle to shows and sales on the Australian mainland. ANA also would fly ice cream into Tasmania for Peters and additionally the Wander company-chartered flights for Ovaltine from Devonport.

After a humble beginning in 1947 when one car was carried to Launceston on a Bristol Freighter by the airline, by the mid-1950s ANA was bringing 100 cars a month into Launceston, such was the enormity and diversity of the air freight business.



**Australian National Airways recently flew this water-boring plant weighing 5 tons 5 cwt. to King Island, in the Bass Strait, in a Bristol freighter. The machinery will be used by the Land Settlement Board to develop irrigation schemes on new farms**

The amount of freight carried by the airline in the post war years grew at an incredible rate from 3,500,000 lbs in 1944/45 to almost 100,000,000 lbs in 1956/57. The revenue from the air freight was estimated to be over 30% of ANA's income, while being only 14% of the revenue for TAA.

Another of ANA's innovations was the introduction of helicopters to Australian aviation. The first Bristol Type 171 Sycamore helicopter was test flown by Captain Max Holyman in Hobart on 11 May 1956. The helicopter was used for a wide variety of purposes including surveys, crop seeding and spraying, lifting people and machinery into remote areas. In October 1956 and again In March 1957, the ANA helicopter performed lifesaving extractions moving injured Tasmanian patients quickly and safely to hospital.



**File photo of ANA's Bristol Type 171 Sycamore helicopter VH – INO (Yarrana)  
at Tasmania's Queenstown airport**

ANA's pursuit of excellence pervaded in every area of the company's operations. Even though the financial situation of the company worsened, the reaction was to invest more in the business. From the introduction of a fleet of sixty ground transport coaches, the purchase of five DC-4 aircraft (which by now were flying the major trunk routes), refurbishing of airport lounges, new buildings for the technical divisions at Essendon and the development of the ANA travel service.

One of the largest and most innovative investments was made in the late 1940s, the teletype system that was used in Operations, Reservations and Administration.

Although Ivan Holyman often retained loyal workers from the airline's early years, he was aware of the need to attract quality executives. His solution was long term, rather than short-term, by instituting a management cadet scheme to train young executives, with one or two being appointed each year.

### **The Post War Business Environment**

The post-war Chifley government was determined that post-war Australian aviation would be a state monopoly and ANA now faced severe competition in the form of the state-owned airline Trans Australian Airlines (TAA) which was created in 1946.

Prior to TAA's arrival, ANA had enjoyed a near monopoly on domestic air transport.

From the viewpoint of history, it is generally agreed that TAA was a better run airline that made better choices of aircraft than ANA.





Ivan Holyman stuck to his relationship with Douglas by buying the non-pressurised DC-4 whilst TAA opted for the revolutionary pressurised Convair. Later Holyman's loyalty to Douglas again was apparent when he bought the pressured DC-6B, while TAA bought the Vickers Viscount turbo prop aircraft.



**ANA DC-4, VH-ANB "Lackrana"**

ANA was floated as a public company in 1949 and the tough competitive aviation market did not result in a profit being recorded until 1954/55.

In 1956 Ivan Holyman was knighted for his services to aviation and it appeared that ANA had recovered from the losses of previous years, but the stability was an illusion and short lived.

Toward the end of the 1950's TAA had driven ANA close to collapse. Holyman himself wanted to expand overseas but the government's ownership of Qantas prevented this so he bought shares in Cathay Pacific and Air Ceylon.



**File photo of ANA DC-6B Kurana**



### **The End of the Airline**

The end of ANA is the subject of much misunderstanding and misconceptions, but it is generally accepted by knowledgeable people that the reason for the demise was one key event, then death of Sir Ivan Holyman on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January 1957 whilst holidaying in Honolulu, at the age of 60 years. The company was a product of his imagination, drive, skill and experience.

He was indeed an enigma in Australian business. He was a man of charm, vitality and a sense of fun who believed in the old-fashioned values of loyalty and trustworthiness and as a result he had a close and almost paternalistic relationship with the staff of ANA.

His feeling towards Tasmania sometimes overrode his business sense. He maintained his home in Launceston always voting in his home city and when travelling overseas and asked where he was from, he would always reply "Tasmania." The airline gave far higher priority to Tasmania than the volume of business warranted. The first helicopter was based in Hobart for many months and the first DC-6B was flown to Tasmania to "*show it off*".

Following the death of Sir Ivan Holyman, the shareholders offered to sell out to the Australian Government to merge with TAA and smaller airlines, an offer the government declined. The ANA board then commenced negotiations with Reginald Ansett of Ansett Airways and finally on 03 October 1957, ANA was sold to Ansett for £3.3 million pounds.

Ansett – ANA was formed on 21 October 1957 and the ANA name was retained until 1968 when the airline was renamed Ansett Airlines of Australia. The contribution made to the airline by ANA and Sir Ivan Holyman was quickly forgotten.

Whereas the history of TAA, Ansett and Qantas have been analysed in minute detail the history of Australia's first modern airline, its creator and its people have been either distorted or ignored.

***"Sadly, ANA is truly the forgotten giant of Australian aviation."***



IVAN HOLYMAN was an Elizabethan—at least he would have liked to have been! A modern Sir Francis Drake or Sir Walter Raleigh, ranging in search of the enemy. Engaging in ventures and enterprise. A Knight tilting for a cause, too, and taking victory or defeat with his characteristic laugh.

In his career what he will be most remembered for was championship of free enterprise, and his practice of it, not only in aviation, but in numerous business ventures mostly in his native Tasmania, and which he pushed with his characteristic energy.

He represented one swing of the pendulum. An uncompromising entrepreneur, he fought for the free rights of business, and championed this cause at a critical period—at a time when the pendulum swung hard in the opposite direction.

In commercial aviation Ivan Holyman will be remembered for his refusal to admit defeat after the death of his brother Victor and tragic aircraft losses in Bass Strait in the early nineteen thirties, and when the present A.N.A. was formed.

Despite these crushing setbacks, he went on, with his colleagues on the Board of A.N.A., to introduce the now-famous Douglas aircraft to Australia, and for the first time give Australian capital cities the type of service we have today, complete with air hostess and meals in the air. With the application of business principles to the enterprise, A.N.A. went from strength to strength till it became the great airline that it is today.

Ivan Holyman will be sadly missed from the Australian scene, but what he stood for and what he accomplished at a critical time in Australia's development will always be remembered, and passed on to those who will follow him in the tradition and the pioneering spirit of that great character, the original Captain Holyman, and of Holyman Bros.

HUDSON FYSH,  
Chairman,  
Qantas Empire Airways Ltd.,  
Sydney.

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A Tribute to Sir Ivan Holyman, from another Tasmanian Aviation Giant,  
Sir Hudson Fysh, the co-founder of Qantas.

Published in Air Travel, (The ANA flight magazine), February 1957





### **ANA – SOME OF THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS and ADVERTISING**

- In 1936 ANA introduces the first DC - 2 aircraft into Australia.
- The same year saw the employment of Miss Rita Grueber of Hobart and Miss Blanch Due of Melbourne as Australia's and ANA's first air hostesses.
- In November 1939 "Matron Hazel Holyman" took over the role of hostess superintendent of 18 hostesses with that number growing to almost 200 on her retirement in 1955.
- ANA's belief in, and dedication toward, safety produced the reputation of having one of the finest engineering and instrument repair shops in the world pioneering many new methods.
- 1936 saw the purchase of the Victorian Flying School to train commercial pilots to ANA's high standards. The barnstorming days for pilots were over with ANA requiring First Officers to have a minimum of 1000 flying hours before being part of their aircraft's crew.
- By the mid 1940's ANA was carrying 80% of passengers, 80% of Air Mail and 86% of air freight carried on commercial aircraft.





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- ANA were the first Australian airline to provide both pilots and hostesses with uniforms.
- ANA introduced auto pilots, co-pilots and radio compasses, air to ground radios and many new flight and navigational aids to ensure increased safety.
- ANA's second DH 86 (VH - URT) was named "Loina" starting a practice that saw all of ANA's aircraft carrying a one-word Australian aboriginal name.
- Employees in 1936 totalled 80 but by mid-1940's this number had grown to almost 4000.
- Late 1940, saw the introduction of the revolutionary "*teletype*" system to handle reservations and operational matters and by 1951 the system covered 4300 miles, had 50 machines and 90 operators throughout Australia.
- 1950 saw the introduction of Australia's first commercial helicopter.
- Between 1945 and 1949 ANA boasted not only the largest internal network in the world but also became the world's 9<sup>th</sup> largest airline.
- The early 1950's saw another innovation in the establishment of the ANA Travel and Holiday Centres the forerunner of today's travel agents.





## **Matthews Aviation Bass Strait Service to Tasmania**

*By L. Millar*

Following the formation of the Australian Aero Club, Tasmanian Section, in September 1927, the Department of Defence purchased land at Western Junction, south of Launceston and by October of 1930 had completed construction of Tasmania's first aerodrome. The Aero Club also built a clubhouse which were officially opened at Tasmania's first Air Pageant on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 1931.

The Commonwealth then built a hangar and provided two De Havilland Gypsy Moths, VH-ULM and VH-ULN for the Club at peppercorn rental. The Club contracted Matthews Aviation from Melbourne to provide staff to allow training of pilots to begin. Three staff from Matthews Aviation were employed, Captain Joe Francis as Chief Flying Instructor, Lawrence Johnson as Instructor and Manager, and Jack Stubbs as Engineer.

Lawrence Johnson would purchase the Desoutter monoplane *Miss Flinders* and start his own commercial service to Flinders Island in March 1932, and Jack Stubbs would go on to be the chief engineer at Australian National Airways.

As well as being at the start of pilot training in Tasmania, Matthews Aviation also conducted one of the pioneering services across Bass Strait. This is the story of this service.

### **Captain George Matthews**

George Campbell Matthews was born on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1883 at Stranraer in Scotland.



At the outbreak of the First World War, he enlisted in the AIF in South Australia, stating that his occupation was a merchant navy navigation officer.

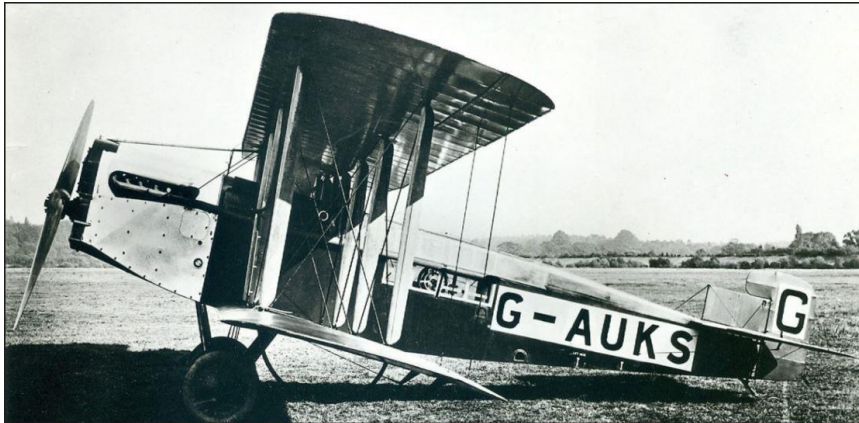
He served as a Sergeant with the 9<sup>th</sup> Light Horse at Gallipoli and then as a Lieutenant in France before transferring to the Australian Flying Corp in February 1917. He was promoted to Captain in October 1917 and remained in the AFC till August 1920.

George Matthews competed in the 1919 England to Australia Air Race, which was won by Ross and Keith Smith in their Vickers Vimy WWI bomber.





Matthews and mechanic Thomas Kay left England on the 21<sup>st</sup> of October 1919 in a Sopwith Wallaby, G-AUKS. This two-seater biplane powered by a water-cooled Rolls-Royce V8 engine was specially built for the race, with only one plane produced. The Wallaby had both the power and speed to be a potential winner, but luck was not with them. To qualify the trip had to be made in under 30 days.



Matthews and Kay experienced many mishaps, weather delays and they were even arrested and imprisoned as potential spies in Yugoslavia, before finally crashing heavily in Bali on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April 1920. The plane was too badly damaged for it to be repaired, so Matthews shipped it back to Australia and it was rebuilt as an 8-seater plane, re-registered as G-AUDU, it flew until 1928 when it crashed and was struck off the aircraft register.

On 28 February 1923 George Matthews received commercial pilot licence No 5 and then became a pilot for the newly formed QANTAS during 1923 – 1924. He was then involved with the Australian Aerial Mail Services, which had the contract to operate airmail services between Sydney and Adelaide, using G-AUDU. He then formed Matthews Aviation in late 1928 and built a hangar at Essendon aerodrome. He established the first service between Melbourne and Philip Island in December 1929.

During WW2 George Matthews enlisted in the Citizen Air Force in December 1939 as a Flight Lieutenant, rising to the rank of Wing Commander at the end of the war. George Matthews died on 27 January 1958, aged 74.

### **Matthews Aviation Victoria - Tasmanian Service**

Matthews Aviation wanted to establish a regular commercial airline service between Victoria and Tasmania using amphibian planes, (which could land on the water or on land). He first purchased the amphibian Saro Cutty Sark VH-UNV which arrived in March 1930. This twin-engine amphibian, with a metal hull and wooden wings, had 4 seats, carrying 3 passengers and a pilot. 12 of these planes were produced. Then in December 1931, he purchased the larger Saro Windhover, VH-UPB, which had a longer range. This three-engine amphibian carried a pilot and 5 passengers. Only 2 of these aircraft were produced, this one being the first.



**CTTY SARK VH-ULN**

On 18 December 1930, the Cutty Sark completed its first trip from Melbourne to Western Junction. Captain Matthews used the visit to promote the possibilities of a new regular service between Victoria and Tasmania.

After undertaking some flights across Bass Strait in 1931 and 1932, it wasn't until early 1933, with the opening of the King Island Aerodrome, that Matthews Aviation starting a regular service with the Windhover between Launceston and Essendon via King Island, and occasionally stopping also at Smithton. Initially it was a weekly service, but in April 1933, it changed to twice weekly. A small mail subsidy helped maintain the service. The Cutty Sark was used for charter flights and joy flights on the mainland, but it did venture to King and Flinders Islands, as well as Launceston occasionally.

In September 1933, Tasmanian Aerial Services, the company formed by Lawrence Johnson, Victor and Ivan Holyman, with *Miss Flinders* and *Miss Currie*, purchased the DH.84 Dragon *Miss Launceston*. With this bigger aircraft, which could carry six passengers, they initiated their Western Junction to Essendon service. This was in direct competition to the Matthews Windhover service.

Later in 1933, the Commonwealth Government called for tenders for the subsidised air mail service throughout Australia, including between Victoria and Tasmania.

The tenders which were accepted to be considered in February 1934 were for six services per week to be operated by multi-engined aircraft. The tender submitted by Matthews



Aviation to operate the service was nearly twice the cost of the Tasmanian Aerial Services tender.

Presumably Matthews saw the inevitable outcome, that they could not compete with Tasmanian Aerial Services given the Holyman financial backing, thus they ceased their Launceston to Essendon service with the Windhover in late February 1934 after the tenders were submitted. They had operated the service for just over a year, with Norman M. Chapman being the first pilot to complete more than 100 crossings of Bass Strait in the Windhover.

The *Examiner* newspaper in Launceston published this article on 02 March 1934:

***Windhover Ceases Run Sterling Service***

*By Avian*

*News has been received in Launceston that the weekly aerial service between Melbourne, King Island, and Launceston conducted by, the Matthews Aviation Company, of the Essendon Aerodrome, Melbourne, has ceased.*

*So is written this to one of the pluckiest fights with the elements of Bass Strait ever made by an aerial firm. At the outset it was realised by the company that it would be difficult to make a profit with the particular machine, but with the intention of gaining experience to enable a tender to be submitted for the Bass Strait subsidised air service the company went ahead with fortitude and made plans for the weekly service which originally was carried out between Melbourne, King Island, Smithton, and Hobart. Later, however Launceston became the Tasmanian terminus of the company. Smithton being only a port of call when there were passengers to be picked up or set down.*

*Capt. F. Neale was the first pilot on the run when it commenced in November 1932, but just before the company commenced calling at Launceston Mr. Norman M. Chapman, master-mariner-airman, took over the piloting of the amphibian. At the outset there were technical details to be contended with, but with determination the company looked into each and every matter so thoroughly that within a few months they were running a service that was remarkable for the accuracy with which it kept to schedule. Mr. Chapman up to the present has only missed reaching Tasmania on one occasion, and even then he set out in face of appalling flying conditions that had already turned two machines back to Melbourne on the previous day, and reached King Island. The Windhover is acknowledged to be a difficult machine to fly, and Mr. Chapman earned the admiration of all for his skilful piloting of the craft.*

*Tenders for the Bass Strait air service closed on Wednesday, and to this fact may be attributed the Windhover's withdrawal from the Strait air service, the company having no further need for experiment so far as Bass Strait is concerned. At present, it is understood, the Windhover is undergoing an overhaul at Essendon.*

Holyman's Airways (as Tasmanian Aerial Services was now named) were successful with their tender. By the end of 1934, Matthews Aviation had ceased operating services to the





Furneaux islands, but still operated charter flights. Captain Matthews still had plans to bring back the Melbourne – King Island – Smithton – Launceston service with the Windhover.

In May 1936 the Windhover was on a charter flight from Essendon to King Island. Not being able to find the aerodrome as darkness fell, the plane landed in the sea near the Currie lighthouse. While anchored, the aircraft was hit by a large wave which damaged the wing, with the aircraft subsequently blown onto the rocks and severely damaged. Although the aircraft was salvaged, it was never repaired.

With the loss of the Windhover, any hope of maintaining the Tasmanian service were dashed and the Cutty Sark was sold. The company ceased operation sometime after this.



**Windhover VH-UPB**



## **Believe it or Not!! – Aviation Mysteries of Tasmania and Bass Strait**

*By W. Dearing*

There are seemingly certain parts of the world where strange things are seen, and even stranger things happen. The Bass Strait Triangle is one of those places. This mysterious part of the world runs from the southern coast of Victoria over the stretch of water that is the Bass Strait and into regions of Tasmania.



**Holyman's Airways DH86 "Miss Hobart"**

In October 1934, while crossing the Bass Strait in perfect weather conditions for flying, the airliner "Miss Hobart" would vanish without a trace. There were 11 people on board, nine passengers and two pilots. Neither they, nor even the smallest amount of wreckage was ever discovered despite extensive searches by military aircraft and vessels.

Aviation experts, both at the time and today, believe the loss of the "Miss Hobart" to be a genuine mystery not least due to the de Havilland DH86 aircraft being one of the most advanced of its era. It made use of four independent engines, with the likelihood of all four engines failing at the same time being almost universally dismissed. Even if that had happened, the plane was designed so that it should have been able to be guided to an emergency landing.

The last transmission from the "Miss Hobart" spookily shares a detail with that of the Jason Manifold account in 1978. The crew allegedly claimed they could hear the sound of a plane around them, and there were even several reports of an "aerial machine" coming toward them. They then reported that the humming sound had suddenly stopped. Nothing more was heard from the "Miss Hobart" after that.



On the same day that Fred Valentich disappeared, on October 21, 1978, (refer Newsletter Issue Number 2) Roy Manifold would capture a picture, shown above, of a strange object in the sky over Bass Strait. Whether the object in the picture is connected to Valentich's disappearance or not is open to debate, but it is considered to be a genuine picture (in that there has been no manipulation of the image).

Roy's son, Jason, was with his father on the evening in question. He says that while his father had gone inside his shed after taking the picture, Jason remained outside watching the sky. Although he didn't see anything, he could hear the sound of a plane engine overhead. Instead of gradually fading off into the distance, however, the engine suddenly came to a stop "as if someone had turned a radio off." Then, there was nothing but silence.

Manifold believes what he heard was connected to the disappearance of Valentich. What makes this seemingly trivial detail all the more intriguing is that, coincidentally or not, it happened almost 44 years to the day that "Miss Hobart" disappeared.

Almost a year following the disappearance of the "Miss Hobart" airliner, another plane, the "Loina", (pictured below) would vanish while traveling from Melbourne to Tasmania. The aircraft had just radioed the control tower in Tasmania to say it was preparing to make its approach to land at Flinders Island when it suddenly went silent. It carried three passengers and two pilots

While none of the five people on board were ever located, a search of the waters did recover some wreckage. Three of the plane's seats were discovered, as well pieces of the petrol tank. Perhaps most intriguing, however, was a small piece of the floor of the plane. There appeared to be a burned patch only several centimetres wide. Further analysis





suggested that the area had been in flames, and other material appeared to show someone had tried to “intensely” stamp it out. Whether this small detail had anything to do with the fate of the plane is unknown.



**Holyman's Airways DH86 "Loina"**

As you might imagine, there were numerous accounts of strange events in the Bass Strait during World War2. However, when it is considered that there were no official reports of any enemy fighters even entering the strait, perhaps it is a little strange that 17 military planes were lost in this stretch of water during the war years alone. There were also other, less fatal incidents.

In 1944, a strange “dark shadow” came out of nowhere and flew beside a Bristol Beaufort bomber for almost 20 minutes over the Bass Strait. Then, without warning, it shot upward at an amazing pace and vanished.

Two years earlier in 1942, an Australian fighter pilot took his plane over the Bass Strait after orders to investigate reports of strange lights made by fishermen. As he surveyed the area, a huge bronze disc came out of the clouds and settled alongside the plane for several moments before vanishing as quickly as it had appeared.

***SO, THERE YOU ARE BELIEVE IT OR NOT!!***



## Leviathans of the Air – The Junkers G38

*By W. Dearing*

With the advent of World War 1 so initiated an era that saw enormous advances in aviation, in particular the development of aircraft, not only as a weapon of war but following the conflict as a means of transport for passengers and freight. Some aircraft like the Douglas DC 2 was the start of a dynasty for the Douglas Company that saw an age of massive development in aircraft design, range and safety. But not all aircraft could claim that success. In the next few issues we will visit some of the lesser-known aircraft that in many cases saw only one or two developed and built and in the case of the “Spruce Goose”, undertook only one flight. it was a period, however, when “big was beautiful and size did matter”.

The **Junkers G.38** was a large German four-engined transport aircraft which first flew in 1929. Two examples were constructed in Germany. Both aircraft flew as a commercial transport within Europe in the years leading up to World War 2. During the 1930s, the design was licensed to Mitsubishi, which constructed and flew a total of six aircraft, in a military bomber/transport configuration, designated Ki-20. The G.38 carried a crew of seven. Onboard mechanics were able to service the engines in flight due to the G.38's blended wing design, which provided access to all four power plants.





To power this huge aircraft, 2 x Junkers L55 V12 water – cooled inline piston engines in the inboard engine mountings whilst 2 x Junkers L8a 6 cylinder, water cooled inline piston engines were carried in the outboard positions.

Structurally the G.38 conformed to standard Junkers' practice, with a multi-tubular spar cantilever wing covered (like the rest of the aircraft) in stressed, corrugated duraluminium. The biplane tail, found in other large aircraft of the time, was intended to reduce rudder forces; initially there were three rudders with only a central fixed fin. The undercarriage was fixed, with double tandem main wheels that were initially enclosed in very large spats. The wing had the usual Junkers "double wing" form, the name referring to the full span movable flaps which served also as ailerons in the outer part.

Passenger accommodation was sumptuous by today's standards and was meant to rival that found on the competing Zeppelin service offered by DELAG. The plane was unique in that passengers were seated in the wings, which were 1.7 m (5 ft 7 in) thick at the root. There were also two seats in the extreme nose. The leading edge of each wing was fitted with sloping windscreens giving these passengers the forward-facing view usually available only to pilots. There were three 11-seat cabins, plus smoking cabins and washrooms.



**D – 2500 at Schiphol, showing the windows of the wing cabins.**

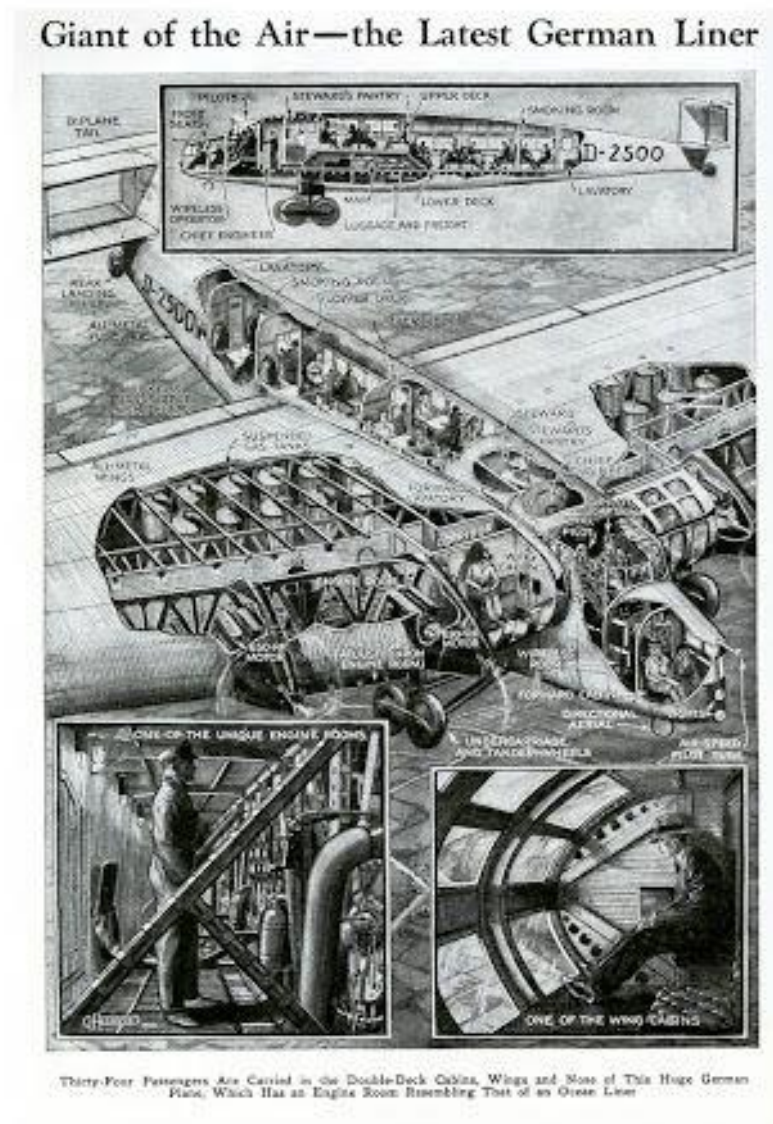
On 1 July 1931 Lufthansa initiated a regularly scheduled service between Berlin and London on flights carrying up to 13 passengers. This London-Berlin service was halted in October 1931 to retrofit the aircraft and expand the passenger cabin of the D-2000. Construction lasted from this time until mid-1932, during which a second deck was built within the D-2000's fuselage—enabling an increased cargo capacity and seating for up to 30 passengers. Additionally, the D-2000's engines were again upgraded to four L88s, giving a total power of 2352 kW (3154 hp) and at this time the D-2000's registration was changed to D-AZUR. Meanwhile, a second G.38—factory number 3302 and c/n D-2500, later changed to D-APIS—was built with a double deck fuselage and capacity for 34 passengers. Six passengers were carried three per wing in each leading edge, the remaining 22 on two levels in the fuselage. Lufthansa used D-APIS on a scheduled service covering the cities Berlin, Hanover,





Amsterdam, and London. This aircraft was named *General Feldmarschall von Hindenburg*. In 1934 D-2000/D-AZUR had its engines upgraded, this time with Jumo 4 engines, giving a total power rating of 3000 kW (4023 hp).

Both planes were in service simultaneously until 1936, when D-AZUR crashed in Dessau during a post-maintenance test flight. Lufthansa had to write off this aircraft due to the extensive damage, but test pilot Wilhelm Zimmermann survived the crash, and there were no other casualties. The second G.38—marked D-2500 and later D-APIS—flew successfully within the Lufthansa fleet for nearly a decade. With the outbreak of World War II, the D-2500/D-APIS was pressed into military service as a transport craft by the Luftwaffe. It was destroyed on the ground during an RAF air raid on Athens on 17 May 1941.





## **Demons Over Waratah**

*By W. Dearing*

It was Wednesday morning 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1937 when Ray Whyman and his patrons at Waratah's Bischoff Hotel raced outside to find the cause of the disturbance overhead.

Struggling to become visual in the low cloud, misty rain and fog that on this particular morning enveloped Waratah and the surrounding mountains, were two Hawker Demon aircraft with rapidly diminishing fuel reserves searching for a suitable landing field.



**File Photo of RAAF Hawker Demon**

The saga started on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1937, when two Demons, A1-3 and A1-8, of Number 3 Squadron RAAF left Richmond Base NSW bound for Hobart to take part in an army co-operation exercise and the Royal Hobart Regatta Day celebrations. The following morning, after spending the night at Laverton, the aircraft left in clear weather for Wynyard where they were to refuel before continuing the flight to Hobart.

The forecast was for fine weather en-route but Pilot Officers G K Buscombe and D. Ashton-Shorter soon found themselves trying to climb above low cloud and fog that stretched across Bass Strait. In addition to these conditions, they had to contend with a strong tailwind that subsequently pushed them further south beyond Wynyard and when they briefly broke visual were shocked by not seeing Bass Strait but steep heavily wooded hills. The



weather conditions inland worsened considerably and with fuel reserves rapidly diminishing they searched unsuccessfully for a suitable landing field near the small township of Waratah.

During this search both aircraft turned north and, in the process, lost sight of each other. Buscombe, flying A1-8 continued to climb unaware of impending disaster. In zero visibility A1-8 struck a tree, rolled violently to the left, and spiraled inverted down the opposite slope. Buscombe was able to regain control of the aircraft and with the engine smoking badly and flying down a second valley he managed to glimpse a relatively treeless area, side slipped the aircraft into a clump of small trees causing the aircraft to ground loop, hit a large tree and eventually coming to rest.



**The Wreckage of A1-8. Apparently, they were lucky to have halted at this spot as a substantial cliff lay just ahead.**

Miraculously both Buscombe and his observer, Flight Sgt Gould, escaped with only a few cuts and bruises but were now faced with the situation of not knowing where they were, having few provisions and desperately needing to seek shelter from the weather. Unbeknownst to the two airman they had crashed near Mount Cleveland some ten kilometres from Waratah in some of the most-dense country that surrounds the township.

Whilst this scene was being played out, Ashton-Shorter and his observer, Flight Sgt Slight, were also searching for a clear landing area when they spotted a gap in the fog and commenced an attempt to land. At the same time Herb Prouse on his horse and cart and Mr Stevens and his son in their truck were driving down the same road as Ashton-Shorter was attempting to land on. Somehow they missed each other with the Demon veering off the road bouncing three times before coming to rest in a paddock. The crew and the locals, although shaken, were uninjured and the two airmen were taken to the Bischoff Hotel for "recuperation".



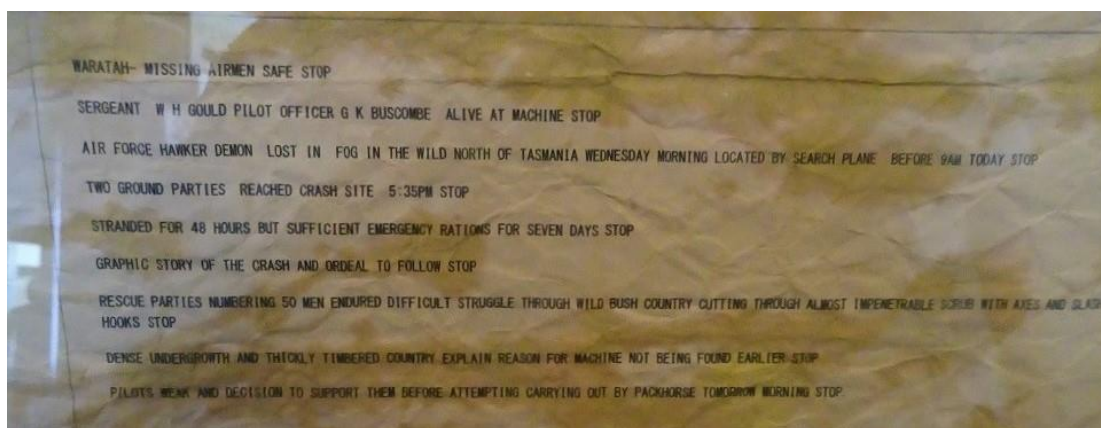


The A1-3 Demon Following its "Landing" on Camp Road Wararah

A massive search was commenced by the locals and RAAF in an effort to locate the missing aircraft A1-8. Men left the mine, school was let out and the community formed search parties within an hour but nothing was found by the end of the first day. By the end of the next day, Thursday, at least three aircraft were involved in the search but, due to the dense scrub, nothing was seen by either the aircraft or the search parties and a real fear for the safety of the crew was beginning to materialise.

At around 8am on Friday a search aircraft spotted a flare fired from the ground. The aircraft noted the position of the flare and immediately returned to Waratah dropping a hand written note to students in the schoolyard who then took the note to the headmaster.

The note instructed the search party to follow the road south of the town with the search aircraft directing them to the flare's spotted position. It was not until almost dark that the search party found the crew, cold, wet, hungry and weak after being affected by exposure to the elements, but otherwise unharmed. It was decided to camp overnight at the crash site and the airmen were brought out by pack horse the next day arriving into Waratah about 6:30pm on Saturday.

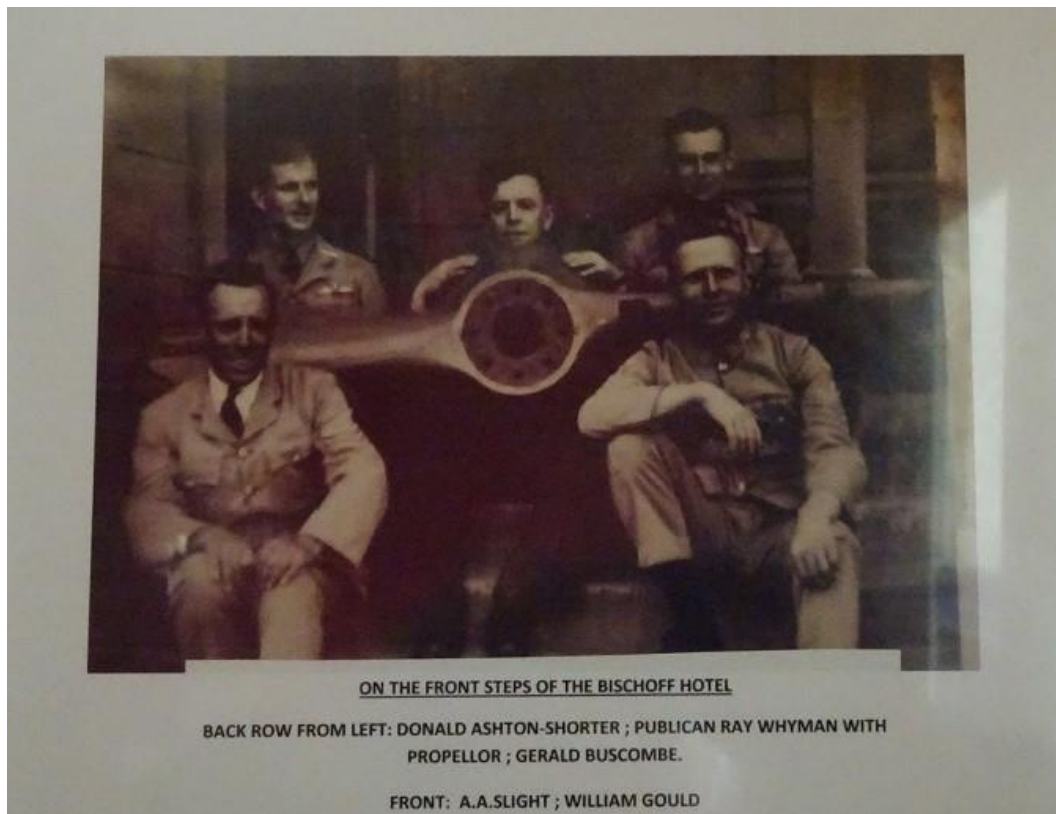


Telegram advising both Crews were safe and well



The town of Waratah hosted the airmen for a over a week and on the Sunday morning a service of Thanksgiving was held in the St James Church and, as a farewell gift to the airmen, the people of Waratah organised an Air Force Ball.

As a tribute to all involved a mosaic of the crews can be seen on the outside wall near the entrance of the Bischoff Hotel with the propellor, from Demon A1-3, taking pride of place above the entrance to the hotel's dining room.



**Above Crews and Publican and below the Prop mounted above the Hotel's Dining Room Entrance**





However, fate and history was not finished with the pilots of the two aircraft.

Tragedy was to follow with one of the Demon's pilots. Only three months after his successful forced land at Waratah, Ashton-Shorter, the pilot of A1-3, was killed when the Hawker Demon he was demonstrating aerobatics at Townsville in suffered a structural failure whilst attempting to pull out of a dive and crashed killing him instantly.

History was not yet done with Buscombe, A1-8's, pilot. In 1977 a group of Army Reserves came across the wreckage of his Demon whilst on an exercise south of Waratah. Discussions with the RAAF followed, resulting in an Iroquois Helicopter lifting the remains of the aircraft out of the crash site where they were returned to the mainland for restoration. Fifty years to the day that Buscombe's incident occurred, the aircraft was rolled out completely restored and proudly showing off Number 3 Squadrons colours.

A member present at the unveiling was the original pilot Gerry Buscombe.



**The fully restored Hawker Demon A1-8 now on display at RAAF'S Museum at Point Cook**





## **A Brief History of the RAAF's Hawker Demon**

Developed from the Hawker Hart bomber, to address the Royal Air Force's lack of a fast fighter aircraft, the Demon went into production in 1932. In 1934 the Australian Government ordered 18 Hawker Demon Mk 1 with some additional modifications to suit Australian conditions and powered by the new Rolls Royce 600hp Kestrel Mk V engine. Follow-on orders were placed and by late 1938 the RAAF had 64 Demons in service.

The aircraft served in seven squadrons including No 3 Squadron and proved a difficult aircraft to fly. The unreliability of the Kestrel engine made maintenance and serviceability very demanding with many aircraft spending a considerable amount of time awaiting spares and/or maintenance. There were the normal amount of crashes, mostly minor, with only ten aircraft being lost, which was as good a record as most other fighter aircraft of that period.

On the eve of World War II 54 Demons were still in service all being relegated to squadron training, communications and target towing roles. By 1948 the last of the Demons had been converted to components with no complete aircraft set aside for restoration. Fortunately, with the discovery of A1-8, that problem has been rectified with the aircraft now restored and on display at RAAF Point Cook Museum.

### **COUNTRY OR ORIGIN**

United Kingdom

### **AIRCRAFT DESCRIPTION**

Two-seat fighter bi-plane

### **POWERPLANT**

One 560hp Rolls Royce Kestrel 12 cylinder VEE liquid cooled engine

### **SERVICE CEILING**

8,382 metres (27,500 ft)

### **ENDURANCE**

2.5 Hours

### **MAXIMUM SPEED**

182 mph at 16,400 ft

### **ARMAMENT**

Two 7.7mm (.303 inch) Vickers machine guns firing forward

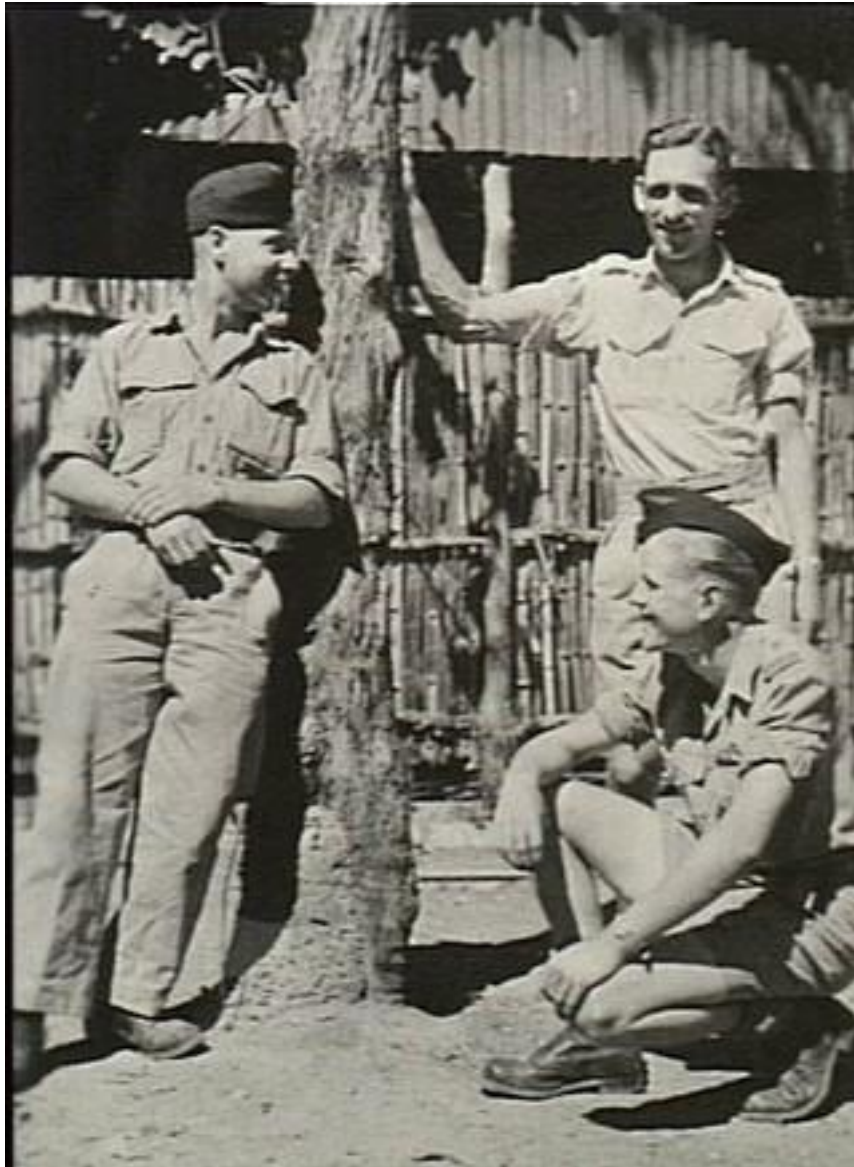
One 7.7mm (.303 inch) Lewis machine gun firing aft

Light bombs could also be carried beneath the wings





**Quiz Time. Do you know the Crew Members?**



**Tasmanian air crew of No. 2 (Mitchell) Squadron RAAF, 23 June 1944.**

Standing: Flight Sergeant Sam Moore, Wireless Air Gunner, of Smithton, and  
Flight Sergeant Alec Allen, Wireless Air Gunner, of Cradoc, Huon.

Front: Pilot Officer Bob Avery, Captain, of Hobart.

(National War Memorial NWA0807)



## **Snippets From Australian Aviation History**

- In 1943 there was some mention of an aircraft wreckage on Deal Island in a gully leading down to the sea. The wreckage had two V12 engines perhaps from a P-38 Lightning or Mosquito. There was some speculation, according to information gained from a Tasmanian man, that the Americans used to regularly fly P-38's down to Tasmania to pick up their supplies of Tasmanian whisky. Never confirmed, never denied but historical nevertheless.



**Deal Island**

- In March 1943 when the Royal Australian Air Force Flying Training Schools ceased operations some 37,730 aircrew had been trained.
- October 1950 saw the Pika, a piloted version of what would become the drone aircraft known as the Jindivik was test flown



**File photo of a drone Jindivik**

- On 04 June 1960 the first DHA Drover Mk 3 was handed over to the Royal Flying Doctor Service.



**Royal Flying Doctor Service Drover Mk 3**

- On 07 March 1965 a Qantas Boeing 707 landed in San Francisco completing the first non-stop flight from Sydney across the Pacific Ocean in 14 hours 33 minutes.
- May 03, 1970, saw the official opening of Sydney's International Terminal by Queen Elizabeth II.



- In July 1976 Clive Canning landed in the UK in his home-built Thorp T-18 Tiger VH-CMC to complete the first flight of an amateur built aircraft from Australia to England.
- In January 1980 the Department of Defence announced that its remaining sixteen Douglas Dakota aircraft would be phased out of service by 1981.
- On 22 January 1980 Deborah Wardley copiloted an Ansett Fokker Friendship from Alice Springs to Darwin on her first commercial flight after her court victory, becoming the first female pilot to be appointed to an Australian Airline.

## **Australian Aviation History – The Way it Was!**

Trans-Australia Airlines operated from 1946 to 1986. Cigarettes brought to your seat and knock yourself out with a miniature. Less easy to get a glass of wine unless you were dining in First Class.



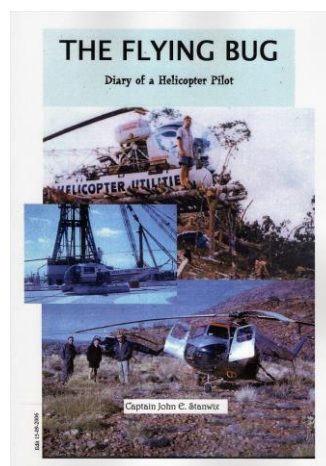
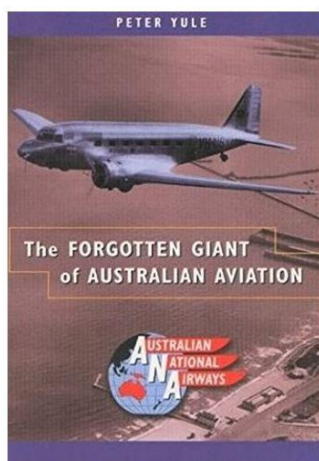


## **The Classifieds**

### **Individual Articles are Available from our Website**

<b>Article</b>	<b>Link</b>
Tasmanian Aviation Giants - Holyman Pt 5 - Flying for ANA, Innovations, New Ventures and the End of an Airline	<a href="#">TAHS2022.001</a>
Matthews Aviation Bass Strait Service to Tasmania	<a href="#">TAHS2021.038</a>
Believe it or Not!! – Aviation Mysteries of Tasmania and Bass Strait	<a href="#">TAHS2022.003</a>
Demons Over Warratah	<a href="#">TAHS2022.004</a>
Tasmanian Aviation Giants – Holyman (All Articles combined)	<a href="#">TAHS2022.005</a>

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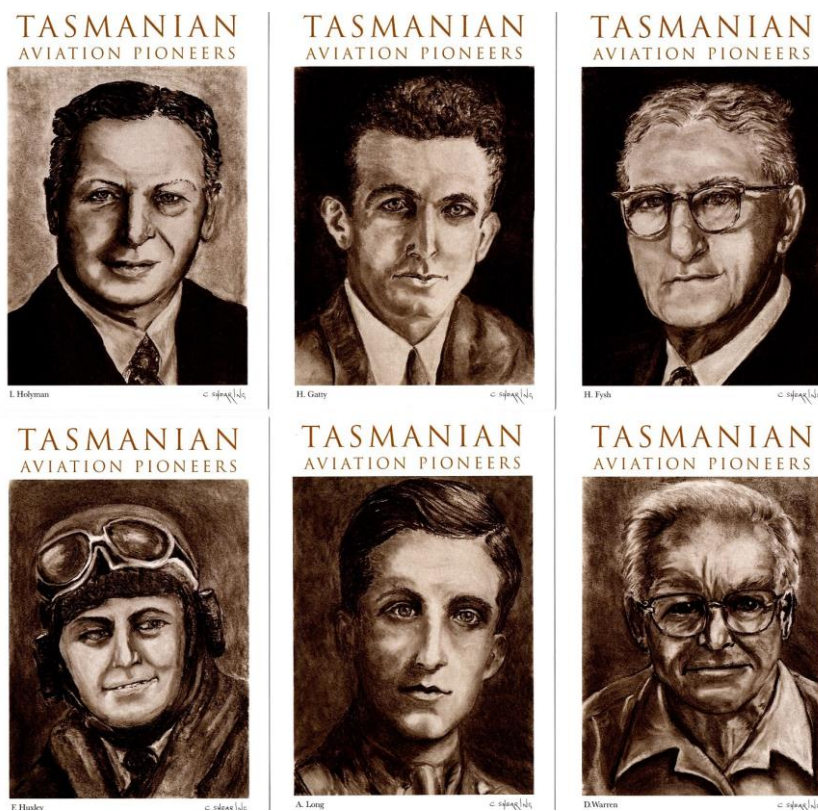




## **Tasmanian Aviation Pioneers Cards Available at our Website**

Tasmanian Artist Catherine Shearing has produced a set of six charcoal drawings of these aviation pioneers: Harold Gatty, Ivan Holyman, David Warren, Hudson Fysh, Arthur Long and Fred Huxley our available at our [Website Shop](#).

They have been reproduced on 250gsm card with our logo and name on the reverse. Two formats are available, each pioneer on an individual card (150 x 105 mm), or all six on a larger card (210 x 100 mm).



**Six Individual Cards above and the Single Card below**

