



“Come to Tasmania” Tourism Promotional Flight - 1928

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Commercial Aviation Plans

From the mid-1920s, proposals were being reported in the newspapers to start air services in Tasmania, provided a Government subsidy was available.

The Prime Minister in an electioneering trip to the State in October 1928 stated that the Government were still uncertain what type of plane was best for the service and how to address the problems associated with a Bass Strait service. He stated they would conduct an investigation into the best options and would not be rushed into a decision.¹

One of these proponents was Tasmanian Airways Ltd, which was registered in Hobart on 10 December 1926, with the stated aim “to establish, maintain, and work lines of aerial conveyance between Tasmania and the mainland.”^{2,3}

The spokesperson for the company was Mr Fabert Fredrick de Mey, who was a machinery and vehicle salesman from Hobart.

Although the company does not appear to have started commercial operations, it did make one venture into aviation tourism advertising to promote both themselves and Tasmania.

Come to Tasmania Advertising Flight

The State and local Governments, through the Tourism Advisory Board, were responsible for promoting Tasmanian Tourism on the mainland. The “Come to Tasmania” Committee had also been focused for several years on ways to bring mainland visitors to the state.

In April 1928, de Mey proposed (on behalf of Tasmanian Airways) to operate an advertising flight over portions of the mainland to distribute promotional leaflets. They sought funding from the Tourism Advisory Board, but it is unclear if any was provided.”⁴

In late August 1928, Tasmanian Airways Ltd announced that the flight was about to commence:⁵

An airplane, which will be named as “Tasmania” with the name painted on it, will start in Adelaide on September the 10th, flying to Ballarat, Melbourne, Sydney, Newcastle, and Brisbane. During the flight, 20,000 folder souvenirs would be distributed in these cities. Each will be numbered and at the end of the flight, four numbers will be drawn for a free trip to Tasmania with two weeks accommodation.



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Tasmanian Airways were also using the trip to promote their intention to commence commercial aviation “on an extensive scale in the near future.”⁵

The folder souvenirs (with competition numbers) were described in *The Mercury*:⁵

The folders, a rough proof of which he showed to "The Mercury" representative, have been elaborately prepared. On the front is displayed an open invitation to "come to Tasmania," and also a fine panoramic view of the Derwent and Hobart, with snow clad Mt. Wellington in the background. At the foot of the illustration abbreviated items of interest concerning Tasmania are given in tabulated form. On the inside of the cover there are a number of attractive illustrations of the various industrial concerns in the State, and on the opposite page scenic views, representative of all parts of Tasmania are set out. On the back page there are a limited number of attractive advertisements, and at the foot details are given of a competition which it is proposed to conduct in connection with the flight.

Three thousand folders were to be distributed in Adelaide, 7,000 in Ballarat and Melbourne, 7,000 in Newcastle and Sydney, and 3,000 in Brisbane. The Mayor of Hobart had drawn the winning numbers in each location before the trip started. The winning numbers were placed in sealed envelopes and left at the various cities, which were opened on 25 October 1928.⁶

At the various location, the folder souvenirs were sold to raise funds for local charities.

The prizes comprised a free coupon, which is the same as issued to the general public by the Tasmanian Tourist Bureau, under what was known as the “Grey Line Tour,” includes a visit to the north-west coast, Mole Creek Caves, Launceston, the northeast coast, Hobart, Port Arthur, National Park, Mount Wellington, and many other places.¹⁰

The Flight

The D.H. Moth plane was chartered and piloted by Captain Joseph Francis with de Mey as the passenger. At each stop, de Mey undertook publicity events on behalf of the Tasmanian Government Tourist Bureau. During the flight, he sent reports back to the “Come to Tasmania” organisation, who reported to the Press.

Mr de Mey met the plane in Melbourne and started to promote the trip by speaking on Radio 3AR, giving an address to the Commercial Travellers Association and he was received by the Mayor of Melbourne (Sir Stephen Morell). Australasian Films took pictures of the plane, both stationary and in-flight, and these appeared all over Australia during the flight.⁷

The official flight was to start in Adelaide. The plane, renamed “Tasmania” for the trip, undertook the first leg from Melbourne to Adelaide on Monday 10 September 1928, leaving at 8 a.m., flying into the wind, it arrived at 4 p.m., being in the air for 6 and half hours.⁸



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While in Adelaide de Mey was received by the Lord Mayor (Alderman Lavington Bonython) and gave a talk over the Radio 5CL on the attractions of Tasmania as a tourist resort. The Commercial Travellers Association hosted a dinner where the folder souvenirs, and the competition being conducted in connection with the flight, aroused great interest. Some of the folders were sold for as much as 2s. 6d., with the proceeds given to charities.⁹

The plane left Adelaide on Wednesday 12 September, this time flying with the prevailing winds, and arrived at Ballarat in 4 hours. They landed at the racecourse and were welcomed by the Mayor and Aldermen of Ballarat. The folder souvenirs were distributed in Ballarat by one of the picture theatres.

They then took the short 30-minute flight to Melbourne. He received a welcome from the Lord Mayor (Alderman Sir Stephen Morell) and was the guest of honour at a dinner given by the Commercial Travellers' Association. The Melbourne quota of folder souvenirs were distributed by the "Herald" and 10,000 leaflets, specially prepared for the occasion, were distributed from the air.⁹

The next day (Thursday), they left for Sydney and arrived after 7 hours of flying, which included a promotional flight over the city. The Sydney folder souvenirs were distributed by the Tasmanian Tourism Bureau.⁹

They left Mascot on Monday (17 September) and arrived at Newcastle in the afternoon, landing at District Park. 3,000 of the folder souvenirs were given to the Mayor to distribute.

The plane then continued on to Brisbane the same day, where 3,000 folder souvenirs were given to the Commercial Travellers Association, who proceeded to sell them, with proceeds going to the cancer campaign fund.

In Brisbane de Mey commented to the press that said that the stretch over the Blue Mountains and along the coast from Newcastle to Brisbane had been particularly delightful, the scenery being gorgeous and inspiring. The actual flying time from Adelaide to Brisbane had been 18 hours and had covered about 3,000 miles.

On Thursday 20 September the plane arrived back at Mascot from Brisbane. They then flew back to Melbourne on Sunday 23 September.

The winning numbers would be announced on October 25th. News reports from Adelaide reported that the winning number in that city was No 1500.¹⁰



FLIGHT OF THE AIRPLANE TASMANIA



The airplane Tasmania in which Mr. F. F. de Mey (left) and Captain Francis (right) recently completed an advertising flight from Adelaide to Brisbane. The flight was undertaken to advertise Tasmania's scenic attractions, 20,000 illustrated folders, descriptive of the State, being distributed en route.

The Mercury, 05 October 1928, p3

Trip Expenses

Upon his return, de Mey pursued funds to help pay for the trip.

In November 1928, he submitted a request to the Tourism Advisory Board for a grant in part payment of expenses for the trip.¹¹ (It is not known if any funds were provided). Then in May the following year (1929) he asked the Hobart City Council for funds to contribute to his expenses incurred by Tasmanian Airways in operating the trip of £355, including the charter of the plane £141, printing and transporting the 20,000 folder souvenirs and travelling expenses. The council recognised the merit in the trip and gave them £50.¹² It is not known whether any more funds were received.

Post Trip Updates

No further new reports have been found regarding Tasmanian Airways after this tourist trip.

Mr de Mey was actively involved in the Commercial Motor Users Association, being employed by International Motor Trucks (part of International Harvester) and later Robert Nettlefold Pty Ltd, a Hobart car and truck sales. He was on the committee formed find a location for a



Hobart airport¹³ in Feb 1931, as well as the committee organising the Air Pageant at Brighton in February 1932.

Mr de Mey soon departed Tasmania with his family sometime in late 1932 and he transferred to Rockhampton as the representative of International Harvester. He later moved to Townsville in 1939 and was reported in the local newspaper to still there in 1952.

Captain Francis would later become the first Pilot Instructor at the Aero Club at Western Junction in late 1930.

¹ Examiner (Launceston, Tas. : 1900 - 1954) Fri 26 Oct 1928 Page 7

² The Mercury (Hobart, Tas. : 1860 - 1954) Fri 31 Dec 1926 Page 4

³ The Mercury (Hobart, Tas. : 1860 - 1954) Tue 23 Oct 1928 Page 9

⁴ Examiner (Launceston, Tas. : 1900 - 1954) Sat 21 Apr 1928 Page 9

⁵ The Mercury (Hobart, Tas. : 1860 - 1954) Mon 20 Aug 1928 Page 7

⁶ The Mercury (Hobart, Tas. : 1860 - 1954) Sat 1 Sep 1928 Page 8

⁷ The Mercury (Hobart, Tas. : 1860 - 1954) Fri 14 Sep 1928 Page 11

⁸ The Mercury (Hobart, Tas. : 1860 - 1954) Wed 12 Sep 1928 Page 13

⁹ The Mercury (Hobart, Tas. : 1860 - 1954) Sat 22 Sep 1928 Page 11

¹⁰ The Register (Adelaide, SA : 1901 - 1929) Sat 27 Oct 1928 Page 11

¹¹ The Mercury (Hobart, Tas. : 1860 - 1954) Fri 16 Nov 1928 Page 16

¹² Examiner (Launceston, Tas. : 1900 - 1954) Tue 28 May 1929 Page 6

¹³ The Mercury (Hobart, Tas. : 1860 - 1954) Tue 17 Feb 1931 Page 7