



***In this issue the history of the Tasmanian Aero Club
95 years old and still flying!!***

Page Twenty-Eight WEEKLY COURIER Wednesday, February 10, 1932

Australian Aero Club—Tasmanian Section



The Aerodrome, Western Junction, the terminal airport for Tasmania, showing the two club machines, ULN and ULM.



Captain J. Francis, Pilot Instructor for the Aero Club, who is in sole charge of the instructional work.



The Club House at Western Junction for the use of Club Members only. A steward is in residence and can supply meals at all times.

Cover photos courtesy of the Weekly Courier.

PART 1 – THE EARLY YEARS 1927 TO 1939



EDITORIAL

Welcome to our September 2022 Newsletter

Whilst we trust that you enjoy this and other newsletters, we would seek your input to ensure future editions contain articles that interest our readers or indeed that are provided by our readers and members. We encourage everybody who may have stories, memories or photos that we could print to contact the newsletter editor at the following address:

dearingwayne@gmail.com

Drop me a line and see if your story can be part of our future editions

Our 11th newsletter features Part 1 in a series of the history of the Tasmanian Aero Club. Formed in 1927 without an airstrip or aeroplane the club grew until today it still operates from the same airport and has become one of the oldest continually operating aero clubs in Australia.

Additional articles include:

- “In the Air” Seminar wrap up
- The Tasmanian Glider Club 1929-1939 – Part 2
- Tasmanian Airways – Hobart to Launceston Service 1934 – 1935
- Latrobe Aerodrome 1931 to 1944
- Swansea Tragedy No 2
- Leviathans of the Air - Part 3 – The Bristol Brabazon
- Coming events - Tasmanian Aviation Historical Association and the Flinders Island Furneaux Museum exhibition
- Do You Remember?
- History - Cockpits then and now.
- The Classifieds



The Tasmanian Aero Club – Part 1 1927 to 1939

By W Dearing

Over the next issues of our newsletter, we will present a history of the Tasmanian Aero Club and the role played by the club in the development of aviation in Australia. The club, now 95 years old, is one of the oldest continually operating flying organisations in Australia with probably only Qantas and the RAAF having a longer history. So, onto the club's story.

Early in 1927, a group of Launceston citizens led by former WW1 pilot's Captains V.C. Holyman and C.W.B. Martin met to investigate the formation of a branch of the Australian Aero Club in Launceston. The Australian Aero Club (Tasmanian Section) was incorporated on the 26th of September 1927. Mr J.E. Thyne was the first president. The committee comprised of Messrs J E Thyne, E S Headlam, E J Tabart, V C Holyman, J A S Boag, C W B Martin and A R Brown. Tasmania now had an Aero Club but no airstrip or aircraft!



File photo of the first committee of the Australian Aero Club (Tasmanian Division)

One of the club's first projects was to lobby the Federal Government to establish an aerodrome near Launceston. Captains Holyman and Martin were appointed to undertake this task and as a result of their work the aero club was appointed as the authority on aviation



matters in the state and was requested to survey an area near Launceston for a potential airstrip that would be inspected by the Department of Defence. One of the sites selected was on the Hogarth property near Western Junction. The airport site was chosen and purchased by the Defence Department in 1928 and work to prepare the airstrip began in 1929.

The site selected proved to be a good one as the old Western Junction Aerodrome still forms the southern end of the Launceston Airport. On the 5th May 1928 the Club sponsored a visit by Australian aviator Bert Hinkler, who made the first solo flight from England to Australia, to Launceston. Hinkler accompanied by his wife landed at Elphin showground. The visit was used by the Club to raise funds. A charge of one shilling (10c) for adults, and sixpence (5c) for children raised much-needed funds and the visit created a huge interest among the citizens of Launceston. A scale model of Hinkler's Avro Avion aircraft that undertook that flight still hangs in the club rooms of the club.



File photo of Bert Hinkler and his Avro Avion aircraft

In 1929 work progressed on the construction of the Aerodrome. 1930 was a busy year for the Aero Club with arrangements made for the construction of a hangar and clubhouse, the lease of two aircraft, and the provision of an instructor and engineer. In July 1930 the Department of Defence called tenders for the construction of a hangar for the Club. The tender was won by W.H. Cox of Launceston, the cost being 698 pounds 15 shillings (approx. \$1400.00).



The hangar was completed in October 1930. The Club leased land (where the control tower now stands) and built a clubhouse at its own expense. This was completed in December 1930 at a cost of approximately 750 pounds (\$1500). In September/October 1930 the Club negotiated the lease of two Gypsy Moth aircraft from the Department of Defence at 'Peppercorn' rental. i.e. 'The payment of one peppercorn per annum on demand'. The Western Junction aerodrome was ready for use in October 1930.



File photo of the original clubhouse and members during the 1931 air pageant

On November 2nd 1930 Mathews Aviation of Melbourne were appointed to supply an instructor and engineer. The Chief Instructor was Mr. Joe Francis, Instructor Laurie Johnson and the engineer was Mr. Jack Stubbs.

The two aircraft arrived in Launceston by ship in November 1930. The first aircraft DH60 Gypsy Moth VH-ULM was the first to fly from Western Junction on November 23rd, followed by the second VH-ULN on November 29th. After three busy years the Club was finally airborne with flying training starting in November 1930. It became very obvious the Australian Aero Club (Tasmanian Section) played a major role in the establishment of commercial and private aviation Tasmania and in the selection of the site of Western Junction Aerodrome, now Launceston Airport. The first two buildings on the aerodrome were the Aero Club hangar and



clubhouse, and the first aircraft to fly from the aerodrome were the club's two Gypsy Moths, VH-ULM/ULN. The Tasmanian Aero Club has now occupied a position on Launceston Airport for over ninety years.



File photo of the club's first aircraft VH-ULM

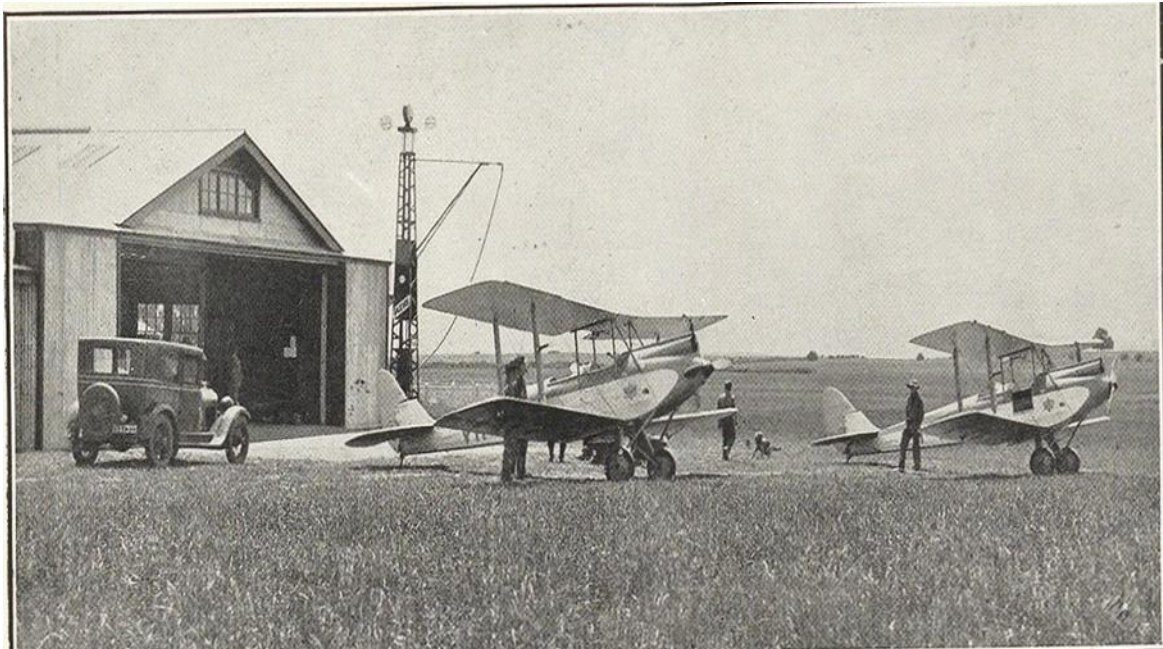
The period from 1925 to 1936 was one of a great many pioneering flights and record attempts. Aircraft, and in particular engines were becoming more reliable and the probability of completing long distance flights was improving year by year. Names like Smithy, Ulm, Hinkler, our own Harold Gatty, Affleck, Mollison, Johnson, Earhart, Batten, Lindbergh, and many more became household names in Australia. It is not surprising that the arrival of the Aero Club aircraft on the Western Junction Aerodrome created a large interest in aviation.

Once the club commenced operations, many locals took advantage of the opportunity to learn to fly. Planning also began for Tasmania's first Air Pageant to celebrate the official opening of the aerodrome. In 1931 Dr John Ramsey of Launceston replaced Mr. Thyne as President.



On February 28th 1931 15,000 people turned out to see Tasmania's first Air Pageant. It is reported that the traffic built up created Tasmania's first traffic jam. The crowd was treated to a display that included Westland Wapiti, Bristol Bulldog, Club and visiting Gypsy Moths, and Smithy's Avro X. The Aerodrome was opened by the controller of civil aviation in Australia Col. H.C. Brinsmead, and the Clubhouse by Air Commodore Richard Williams, later to become Air Vice Marshall Sir R. Williams. In his opening speech, Air Commodore Williams congratulated the Club on its efforts to establish the Aerodrome and to build a Clubhouse at its own expense.

The first Air Pageant was not without a tragic accident when a Gypsy Moth VH-UNL piloted by L. Johnson, spun into an oat paddock opposite where the Clubhouse now stands, killing the lady passenger in the front cockpit.



File Photo of the Club's First Aircraft VH-ULM and VH-ULN

For the Australian Aero Club (Tasmanian Section) the early 30s saw a rapid expansion in flying activities. After the opening of Western Junction in March 1931 the club moved quickly to establish a branch in the Hobart area. A lease was obtained on the infield of the Brighton Racecourse and an aerodrome established. An instructor was appointed and flying training commenced in April 1931. Flying training was now available in both the North and South of the state.

The membership in the south increased rapidly and before the end of 1931 southern members were attempting to form their own club. Perhaps they never got over the fact that the Australian Aero Club (Tasmanian Section) was formed in Launceston and not in the capital city Hobart.



Not surprisingly the civil aviation authorities rejected the application as they felt that the development of aviation in Tasmania would be best served by having only one club to service the entire state.

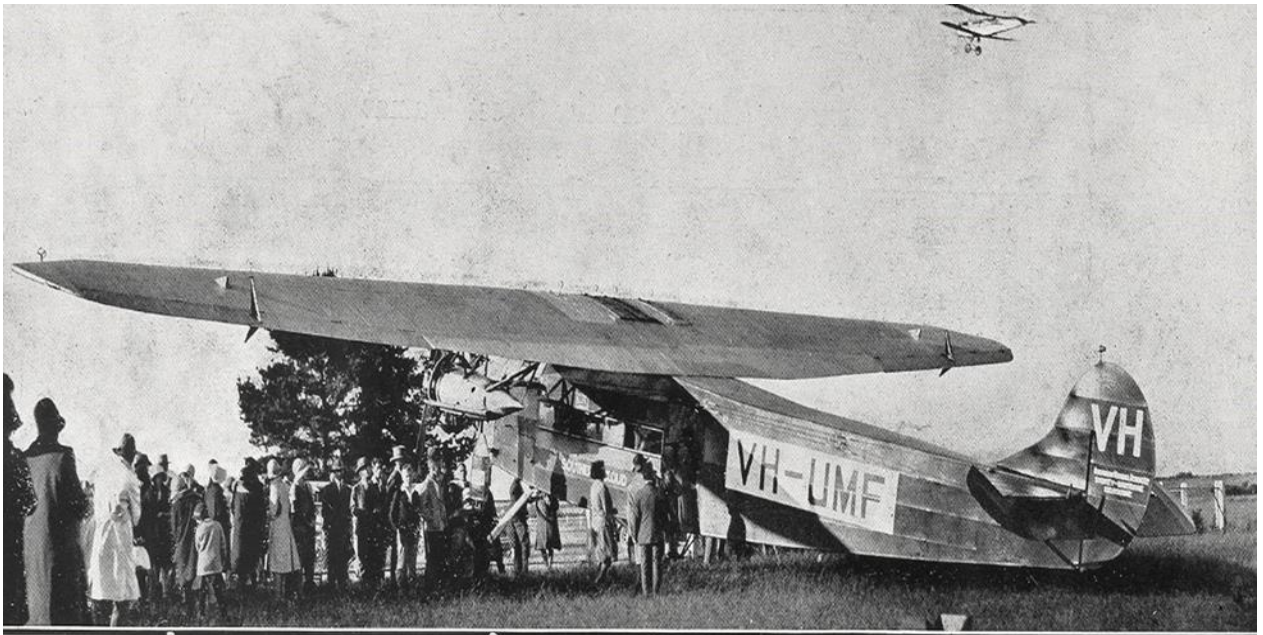
As flying training and private flying increased the need arose for a third aero club aircraft. Once again, a 'peppercorn' lease was arranged with the defence department for the supply of a DH60 Cirrus Moth. RAAF Cirrus Moth A7-13 formerly in seaplane configuration was converted back to wheels and became VH-UAU. In September 1932 VH-UAU was shipped to Launceston by boat. The first entry in the logbook read: Kings Wharf to Western Junction, 15 minutes, pilot V.C. Holyman. The aircraft was unloaded, wheeled to the paddock behind the Wharf, unfolded, fuelled, checked, and flown out. Try that today and see what happens.

Club records show that from November 1930 to December 1931, club aircraft flew 850 hours and trained 13 pilots to 'A' license. The 'A' license was the equivalent of a private license, and the 'B' license was the equivalent to a commercial. Seems back to front, but that's the way it was. As a comparison, in 1931 the Royal Aero Club of NSW trained 26 pilots and the Royal Aero Club of WA trained 12 'A' license pilots and 1 'B' license pilot. Between 1930 and 1939 the Club operated six DH-60 Moths. One VH-UAU was powered with a Cirrus 2 engine and had a wood framed fuselage. The remaining 5 were all DH-60M Gypsy Moths using the DH Gypsy 1 or 2 engines. They were registered as VH-ULM, ULN, UVO, UMD, and UNQ.

The original DH-60 proved to be a success for De Havilland. They were an ideal training aeroplane and also popular with private owners. The 80HP Cirrus 2 Moth in 1927 cost 730 pounds Sterling (\$1600), and cruised at about 70-80 MPH. It became one of the most popular light aircraft in the world for the next fifteen years. As a tail dragger with no brakes, it was a handful to fly in windy conditions and club records of this time reflect this problem with many minor accidents involving bent undercarriage, wing tips, and propellers. In this period the club at all times employed an engineer who would have been kept busy mending broken aeroplanes.

The early 1930s were the formative years for aviation in Tasmania. Australia was just beginning to recover from the 1928-30 depression and given the circumstances it is surprising that the Aero Club and commercial aviation were able to 'get off the ground' during this period. But get off the ground the club did and during the thirties proved to be somewhat of a catalyst for early commercial aviation operations from Western Junction.

During this period the aero club saw the immergence of some of Australia's greatest aviation pioneers. People like Hudson-Fysh, Arthur Long, Harold Gatty and the Holyman brothers appear in the club's history books. Additionally international aviation greats paid the club a visit. Names like Ulm, Hinkler, Earhart, Lindberg and Wiley-Post all stopped-off at the club. On January 16th 1931 the first airline passenger flight arrived at Launceston from Melbourne. Sir Charles Kingsford Smith piloted the historical flight in the ill-fated "Southern Cloud". The flight returned to Melbourne on January 19, 1931.



File photo of the "Southern Cloud" after landing on the inaugural flight from Melbourne to Launceston

The following table shows the growth in hours flown and pilots trained from 1930 to 1938

Year	Total Hours Flown	Pilots Trained	Total Members
1930/31	830	13	
1932	666	25	
1933	855	33	
1934	989	44	167
1935	1221	56	
1936	1368	65	100
1937	1042	72	
1938	1094	86	126

Information courtesy of "Aircraft" Magazine and Annual Reports of Tasmanian Aero Club



During the 1930's the Club operated 6, DH-60. "Gypsy Moths" from Western Junction, Latrobe, Wynyard, Smithton and Brighton until 1935 and then from the new Hobart Cambridge Airport. One of these aircraft was sold in the mid 30's and two were written off after accidents in 1939, however, at the outbreak of WW11 the Club ceased flying operations and the three remaining "Moths" were placed in storage at Cambridge with the RAAF taking over the Clubhouse and hangar at Western Junction.

After more than ninety years the first aircraft owned by the club, VH-ULM, has been magnificently restored and is still flying today, a tribute to those early years



File Photo of the club's first aircraft VH-ULM magnificently restored.

This article is available on our [website](http://www.tahs.org.au).

Next issue the years after the war.



Summing Up “In the Air” Seminar

A most successful Aviation Seminar was held in the Auditorium (LCGS) on Saturday 25 June 2022 followed by a Soiree in the Hub that evening.

About 50 aviation enthusiasts registered and heard from several speakers who had spent their entire careers in the RAAF. Wing Commanders (Rtd) Mac Cottrell, Bill Mattes and Stuart Bryce spoke about their careers along with Captain Steve Murray who saw active service in the Rhodesian Air force and then flying 737s for QANTAS in Australia. Mac had flown in from NSW, Bill from Qld and Steve from WA. Lindsay Millar our Launceston aviation historian gave an account of the establishment of the Tasmanian Aero Club mentioning several Launceston pioneers in the early days of Aviation in Australia.

The Seminar concluded with a tour of the Schools Aviation Centre

The Acting Headmaster Nick Foster welcomed the registrants and looked forward to a strong relationship between the Society and the School through its past aviation pioneers and the successful establishment of the school’s aviation studies.

Paul A.C. Richards AM who convened the Seminar and Soiree on behalf of the Tasmanian Aviation Historical Society said that the setting at Grammar was a most appropriate one allowing the Society to pay tribute to several past students of the school who paved the way as aviation pioneers in Tasmania and Australia in the first half of the 20th century which included Sir Hudson Fysh, (Founder of QANTAS), Victor Holyman, (Founder of Holyman’s Airways), Frederick Huxley (First to fly Bass Strait with female passengers, his pregnant wife and daughter) and David Warren (Inventor of the black box).

The evening Soiree was a great assembly of pilots who reminisced about their careers and was very well attended and catered by the school. Stuart Bryce an old boy addressed the group of about 30 on his career with the RAAF flying C130s Hercules aircraft and his experience of evacuating Darwin following cyclone Tracy.





In the Air

Aviation Stories and Adventures

Launceston Church Grammar School, 25 June 2022

Speakers: Mac Cottrell, Bill Mattes, Lindsay Millar, Steve Murray, and Stuart Bryce



Stuart Bryce, Mac Cottrell, Doug Chipman and Bill Mattes



Convenor Paul Richards



Mac Cottrell (C)



Lindsay Millar (L)



The Tasmanian Glider Club 1929-1939 – Part 2

By: P.A.C. Richards, A.M.

(The first part of this article appeared in our previous (Winter 2022) Newsletter).

The Tasmanian Glider Club has had a chequered career, however, possibilities for gliding in Tasmania were great.

The *Examiner* reported:

The late Mr. G. K. Rice-Oxley, who held the Australian duration record before his time was beaten by Mr. Pratt, once said that with a primary glider he could have beaten Mr. Pratt's record in Tasmania. At that time Mr. Rice-Oxley was the Civil Aviation Department representative at Western Junction aerodrome. The records of instruments charting the strength and direction of winds at that aerodrome were available to him. On one occasion he pointed out that a north-west wind had not dropped below 30 m.p.h. velocity for three days. He claimed that, theoretically, it would have been possible to keep a primary glider in the air all that time. In practice, of course, the feeding of the pilot and his ability to keep his seat on an open glider throughout a cold night would have to be taken into account. While flying about Tasmania, Mr. Rice-Oxley kept a look-out for hills suitable for gliding. It will be remembered that it was in this way that he noticed the soaring possibilities of Mount Elephant, Victoria, a hill from which he was later launched on a record-breaking flight. He was particularly impressed with a large and, in parts, heavily timbered hill to the west of the main road and a few miles south of Powranna. If he had remained in Tasmania long enough he would have attempted the record from this hill. The revived interest in gliding gives rise to the hope that an Australian duration record will be established in Northern Tasmania, perhaps from this hill selected by one who played a big part in the advancement of the sport in the Commonwealth.

Over the first decade of glider flight crashes and other mishaps, all of them expensive in time, money, and public confidence sharpened the enthusiasm of members, and the annual meeting held in the clubrooms, Melville St., Hobart, marked the beginning of a new era in its affairs.

The difficulty in keeping a flimsy glider in the air and landing it safely is much greater than the flying of a powered machine. In the ordinary light aircraft, almost all dangerous situations can be remedied by increased power from the engine, but the glider pilot has only his wits between himself and disaster. Motorless flight requires a study of meteorology, of the significance of cloud formations and their associated air movements, of the combined effects of the conformation of the ground and the heat of the sun in the creation of thermal and



ridge currents, and the manoeuvring of the machine to take the best advantage of these conditions.

In an article published in July 1939 the broad principles which govern gilding were these:

(1) Where the wind blows against the side of a hill or ridge, a deflection up current is formed on the windward side of the hill. The strength of the up current varies according to the contour of the hill. The current bears the machine-like thistle down, and the pilot continues in the air by flying back-wards and forwards in the region of lift.

(2) Thermal currents are convection circulations, caused by' the unequal heating, of the earth's surface. "Thermals," as they are known, are usually narrow draughts, and considerable skill is required for the pilot to circle into the strongest part of the up-current and so not only maintain but gain altitude.

Flights to a height of more than 22,000 ft. above the point of release, and to more than 400 miles from the point of take-off, have been made, and the record duration flight is two days, two hours and 15 minutes.

In some parts of the world gilders are towed by an aeroplane before release, and a "flipper" arrangement with elastic cord is sometimes used, but the method employed by the Tasmanian Club is to tow the machine on a rope behind a motorcar.

A glimpse of the preparation of these gliders in the Gliding and Soaring Club in Hobart was an added description of the dedication of its member ship.

Interlaced spars, thinner than the finger combine to form wings tail units and ailerons throughout the large, low roofed room, tins and bottles of "dope" and sections of fabric are strewn about in profusion the air is laden with the smell of varnish and dressing preparations, tools, diagrams and instruction books are everywhere. Members have been working for months repairing and strengthening wings, struts and controls and a complete new fuselage has just been completed for the "secondary" (dual-control) ' machine which has a wing-span of 30ft. The new body is a work of art. It is lighter, stronger, and more pleasing to the eye than its predecessor, and its detailed workmanship must be seen to be appreciated.

The Zögling primary single seat machine, with a wing-span of 32ft., has been completely overhauled, and work is in progress on a Northrop primary recently purchased from a defunct body In the North.

"Ordinary" members receive instruction in construction and repairs and elementary ground training. The membership fees 10/- a year and the minimum age 14 years., Flying



TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY Incorporated

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members over 16 years of age are charged £2 a year. Particulars may be obtained from the secretary, "Mr. H. T. D'Alton, 30 View St., Sandy Bay."

Under Its new scheme of operations, the club intends to erect a substantial hangar in Brighton, and to issue "A," "B," and "C" licences for proficiency in gliding and soaring.

The aircraft pilot who has first become a proficient glider pilot is a better man at his job than the pupil who makes his first instructional flight in a powered machine. That opinion is substantiated by experts the world over. The art of gliding and soaring, for it is an art, is receiving increasing recognition each year in Europe, Great Britain, and America, and in Australia the Commonwealth Government has shown, its appreciation by subsidies to clubs.

The Gliding and Soaring Club of Tasmania passed through its experimental stages, and learnt rather bitter early lessons, profited by its mistakes, and was about to launch out on extensive activities, however WW11 changed everything.

In 1950 Mr. C. Dixon, formerly of Launceston, who built the first glider used by the old Tasmanian Gliding Club, was now working on aircraft as big as Skymasters at Essendon. Mr. Dixon, who was secretary of the Gliding Club from 1929 to 1939, when it went out of existence was visiting Launceston in the same week as a correspondent to "*The Examiner*" urged the formation of a club.

The Examiner reported: Mr. Dixon confirmed the correspondent's view that the country around Launceston is ideally suitable for gliding. The old club however had experienced difficulty in obtaining suitable areas from which to operate, he said. The glider Mr. Dixon built for the club cost about £50 for material today it would probably cost about £100. The glider was sold to the Hobart club but Mr. Dixon has plans of a primary glider he is willing to lend to any enthusiasts willing to undertake the job. Mr. Dixon says he thinks the registration of the old club is still in order, and he would be willing to give advice and assistance to anyone interested in reforming a club. An appointment can be made with Mr. Dixon at Powell's Electric Service, Charles St.

The [full article](#) is available on our website.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mercury (Hobart, Tas: 1860 - 1954), Thursday 8 July 1937

Mercury (Hobart, Tas: 1860 - 1954), Saturday 15 February 1930

Mercury (Hobart, Tas: 1860 - 1954), Tuesday 28 October 1930

Advocate (Burnie, Tas: 1890 - 1954), Saturday 31 January 1931

Mercury (Hobart, Tas: 1860 - 1954), Wednesday 25 February 1931

Examiner (Launceston, Tas: 1900 - 1954), Wednesday 12 October 1932

Examiner (Launceston, Tas: 1900 - 1954), Saturday 11 September 1937

Mercury (Hobart, Tas: 1860 - 1954), Thursday 27 July 1939

Examiner (Launceston, Tas: 1900 - 1954), Wednesday 15 February 1950.



An Early Glider circa 1936 and below todays modern glider. (File photos)





TASMANIAN AIRWAYS – HOBART TO LAUNCESTON SERVICE 1934 to 1935

By C. Byrne

Tasmanian Airways Pty. Ltd., the first aviation company registered in Hobart, operated at two different times. It 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.”

Its first aviation venture was to undertake a Tasmanian Tourism promotional flight on the mainland in 1928, which also served to highlight its long-term ambitions. (The story of this flight is available on our [website](#).)

The second aviation venture was to operate a de Havilland Hawk Moth to carry passengers between Launceston and Hobart during 1934 and 1935.

The Hawk Moth was the first of many high-wing monoplane Moths that were designed by de Havilland for light transport or an air-taxi role. Along with a pilot, it could carry 5 passengers. The aircraft had a fabric-covered steel-tube fuselage and wooden wings. The Hawk Moth was first flown on 7 December 1928, with only eight being built. Two were imported into Australia.

VH-UNW was the third Hawk Moth built and registered in Australia to the de Havilland Aircraft Pty. Ltd. on 19 April 1930. De Havilland used it as a demonstrator, including flying Amy Johnson on her visit in 1930.

Hart Aircraft Service then purchased the plane on 18 April 1931 and then sold it to Tasmanian Airways on 15 February 1934.



VH-UNW, ca. 1935 (National Library of Australia)



TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY Incorporated

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At the start of 1934, Tasmanian Aerial Services were operating "Miss Launceston" (6 passengers) between Melbourne and Launceston (via Flinders or King Island), "Miss Currie" (3 passengers) and "Miss Flinders" (2 passengers) around Tasmanian aerodromes, including from Hobart to Launceston.

There were two other airlines operating between Melbourne and Launceston. Matthews Aviation were providing a weekly service with the Cutty Sark amphibian (4 passengers); and Hart Aviation Service were providing a bi-weekly service with the Avro Ten "Tasman". Both these services stopped in early 1934, leaving Tasmanian Aerial Services as the only airline in Tasmania.

When Tasmanian Airways publicised their plans in February 1934, its spokesman was Mr. P. T. L. Taylor, who had been engaged as its pilot. He explained that they were proposing to operate a daily air service between Hobart and Launceston. In particular, this would bring passengers from Hobart to Launceston to connect with the "Miss Launceston" Bass Strait Service.

Additionally, they knew that one of these Bass Strait Operators would be operating six flights a week from Melbourne to Launceston for passengers and airmail services later in 1934 once the Federal air mail tender had been awarded. With the increased passenger services from Melbourne to Launceston, there was an opportunity to operate a commuter service within Tasmania.

The Hawk Moth was flown from Essendon to Western Junction and then on to Hobart on 18 Feb 1934 by Mr. P. T. L. Taylor. The plane was then named the "City of Hobart".

Tasmanian Airways erected a hangar in mid-April 1934 at Brighton which was big enough to accommodate the Hawk with wings folded and also provided engineering facilities. (In 1934, Brighton Aerodrome was in use, Cambridge aerodrome was still being developed).

Before the commencement of the Hobart to Launceston service, the monoplane was used for private flights and air-taxi work, including about 100 hours of flying. Visits were made to Swansea, King and Flinders Islands, Smithton, Wynyard, and Latrobe, and other parts of the State. About 150 flights were made, and over 300 passengers carried.

The inaugural flight of the Hobart to Launceston service was on 06 August 1934. During the Western Junction lay over, the plane undertook a special flight to Flinders Island to bring a woman's body to Launceston for burial.

The plane schedule initially operated three times a week, on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, leaving Brighton Aerodrome at 8.40 a.m. The flight north to Western Junction landed at 9.25 a.m. which allowed passengers to connect with the Holyman's air service to Melbourne. The return trip left Western Junction at 3.00 p.m. Passengers were ferried from the aerodromes to both Hobart and Launceston. The one-way fare was 35/-, or \$180 today.

In November, the scheduled was altered its schedule so that it was running on boat days, (steamer service between Launceston and Melbourne), thus on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.



Tasmanian Airways Schedules (as published in the "Examiner")

FLY TO HOBART
Regular Service every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, by Hawk Monoplane City of Hobart.
Leaving Hobart 7.15 a.m., arriving 8.45 a.m. Western Junction.
Leaving Launceston on return 2.30 p.m. arriving Hobart 4.30 p.m.
Fares, 25/- single, £3/6/6 return.
Booking Offices:
Tasmanian Airways Pty. Ltd.,
101 MACQUARIE-ST., HOBART.
Government Tourist Bureau, Launceston and Hobart,
And F. H. Stephens Pty. Ltd., St. John-st., Launceston.

22 October 1934

FLY TO HOBART
Regular Service every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, by Hawk Monoplane City of Hobart.
Leaving Hobart 8.30 a.m., arriving 10 a.m. Western Junction.
Leaving Launceston on return 2.30 p.m. arriving Hobart 4.30 p.m.
Fares, 35/- single, £3/6/6 return.
Booking Offices:
Tasmanian Airways Pty. Ltd.
101 MACQUARIE-ST., HOBART.
Government Tourist Bureau, Launceston and Hobart;
And F. H. Stephens Pty. Ltd., St. John-st., Launceston.

04 December 1934

"The Mercury" reported in its annual review of aviation for 1934:

The service has been continuously maintained, and more than 400 passengers have been carried. The De Havilland has been in the air for 300 hours and has flown about 30,000 miles. Mr. P. T. L. Taylor had charge of the machine when the service was commenced, and early in October he transferred his activities to the Bass Strait service. Mr. R. H. Gordon has been flying the Tasmanian Airways machine since that time.

The service operated until 10 January 1935, when a piston seized necessitating a forced landing at Brighton. The service would have operated for about 5 months. Tasmanian Airways also cease operations at this time as well. The plane was not repaired and was later sold.

Two pilots who flew the Service. Mr. P. T. L. (Len) Taylor, of Sorell, Southern Tasmania was the first pilot in charge of the Hawk Moth till he joined Holyman's Airways in October 1934. He was one of the first pilots to learn to fly in southern Tasmania, trained by Captain Joe Francis at the Aero Club. He was the first pilot wholly trained in Tasmania to gain a "B" or commercial pilot's licence. He went on to have a successful career with Australian National Airways.

Mr. R. Gordon, replaced Len Taylor on the service. He was a member of the crew of the Avro Tens operated by the first (Kingsford Smith & Ulm) Australian National Airways and the Hart Aircraft Service Pty. Ltd. on the Bass Strait route.

This article is available on our [website](http://www.tahs.org.au).



Latrobe Aerodrome 1931 to 1944

By C. Byrne

In November 1930, the first aerodrome in Tasmania was constructed at Western Junction allowing the Australian Aero Club (Tasmanian Section) to receive its first planes and commence pilot training.

Western Junction was built and owned by the Federal Government. In 1931, the policy of the Federal and State Governments was not to develop regional aerodromes in Tasmania. Thus, it was left to local Municipalities or private citizens to develop landing grounds or aerodromes.

During 1931, the development of five regional aerodromes commenced, at King Island, Flinders Island, Smithton, Wynyard and Latrobe. The aerodrome at Latrobe was the first to be completed.

At Latrobe, a private Aerodrome Committee was formed by local businessmen, with Harold Lord being the main proponent. They proposed to use the old racecourse reserve, which is located on the western side of the Mersey River, just over the bridge on the road to Devonport, being about a mile to the Post Office.

The reserve had been vested to a group of locals, known as the Racecourse Reserve Trustees, in 1882 by the State Government. They developed a racecourse and conducted meetings until the about 1920. By 1931, the race track was used for training horses only.

The site was flat, but it was covered in trees. The Aerodrome Committee proposed to clear the tress and develop a landing strip adjacent to the racecourse. In June and July 1931, the site was inspected by Captain Huxley and Flying Officer Owen, who were surveying potential landing strips in the state at the time, and then by Huxley and the Civil Aviation Department Superintendent of Aerodromes, Mr A. R. McComb. They all agreed the site would be suitable for an aerodrome.

The Latrobe Municipal Council supported the project, but they would not assist it financially. They did arrange for the Reserve to be vested in the Council and then allow the land to be developed as an aerodrome by the Aerodrome Committee.

In August 1931, the Aerodrome Committee commenced developing the site, with Harold Lord supervised the work. Clearing the land was initially financed by the sale of the firewood that was harvested. (The wood was sold to Mr Lord's Latrobe Hydro-Electric Company, which operated a steam boiler when the water levels were low).

As aviation developed during the 1930s, the requirements of the Civil Aviation Department on the construction of aerodromes also expanded. Aerodromes for commercial or pilot training needed to be licenced with the Civil Aviation Department. Their staff were required to inspect and approve the site.



In 1931, the requirements for a First-Class aerodrome for all aircraft to land was an area of 660 yards square, or 440 yards square for a second-class aerodrome, where light aircraft could land.

At Latrobe, the committee started on clearing the land for a second-class aerodrome, which would mean about 32 acres of the 159 acres on the site would need to be cleared.

As well as providing a flat surface for landing and take-off, as the landing grounds were grass, drainage to remove water during the winter months was also required.

The first landing on the aerodrome was on Wednesday 28 October 1931, by Captain Francis in an Aero club moth. This coincided with the annual Latrobe Show:

Captain J. Francis, the Australian Aero Club Instructor, piloted one of the club's aeroplanes from Western Junction to Latrobe yesterday, and effected a perfect landing on the new aerodrome. During the afternoon Captain Francis conducted a number of passenger flights, and also gave an exhibition of trick flying. The presence of the aeroplane created a lot of interest and was a success as a show attraction.

The Civil Aviation inspection was performed in early December 1931, with a favourable outcome. This allowed the Aerodrome Committee to finalise planning for an Air Pageant and official opening on 28 December 1931 to coincide with the annual Latrobe sport carnival. The aerodrome was then officially opened by the local member, Joseph Lyons, who has just been elected as Prime Minister at the recent Federal election.

The aerodrome had a restricted licence for light aircraft. It would need to be enlarged and upgraded to the larger planes which were proposed to be used for commercial use in the years to come.

To this point, the development costs had been funded by the Aerodrome Committee, through firewood sales and by the provision of personal loans.

In 1932, commercial aviation within Tasmania commenced with Lawrence Johnson and the Holyman Brothers in their two planes, Miss Flinders and Miss Currie.

The Committee believed that Latrobe could be a successful commercial aerodrome when services between the regional aerodromes began operating. They sought financial help from the Municipal Council to continue developing the site to employ more unemployed men. They asked the Latrobe Municipal Council to apply for a loan of £300 from the State and Federal Government funds assigned to projects which assist the unemployed. As the Council has no direct interest in the Aerodrome, the Committee executive (Harold Lord and David Constable) would act as personal guarantors for the loan. The loan was approved in July 1932, with the guarantors required to meet the 10-year repayment schedule of £36 per annum, the income being from landing fees, air pageants and grazing rights over the land.



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The Aerodrome Committee continued working on the landing area under the guidance and approval of the Civil Aviation Department. More funds were required to complete the work, which again were provided by Mr Lord as a loan to the Committee.

With the opening of the King Island aerodrome, Victor Holyman flew *Miss Currie* on the inaugural Tasmanian Aerial Services passenger service from Western Junction on 24 December 1932. The Western Junction to King Island service, generally using the DH.83 Fox Moth *Miss Currie*, and would stop at the North West Coast aerodromes if there were passengers to drop off or collect:

Flying from the Western Junction aerodrome the aviator sets his course for Latrobe. Passengers are picked up and put down at the licensed aerodrome at this town, and then the flight is continued to Wynyard and Smithton. At Latrobe and Wynyard a system has been devised whereby the booking agents place sheets on stretches of green grass outside their premises if it is necessary for the plane to land to pick up passengers. From Smithton the flight to King Island is made via Robins and Hunter Islands. An emergency landing ground being available at Robins Island.

The aerodrome was mainly used by the Aero Club, as well as planes offering joy flights.

In September 1933, with the arrival of the bigger DH.84 *Miss Launceston*, Tasmanian Aerial Services commenced a service across Bass Strait to Melbourne started. The route alternating between Flinders or along the NW Coast to Wynyard and King Island.

Tasmanian Aerial Services would not use Latrobe as a stopping place as it no longer met the current requirements for commercial planes.

An Air Pageant was held at Latrobe on 28 February 1934, with Aero Club, RAAF and commercial planes attending.

The Commercial aviation changed in 1934 when Holyman's Airways were awarded the air mail tender to operate services across Bass Strait. They ordered bigger planes (DH.86s) and again using Wynyard as the stopping point on the Western Junction to Essendon route via King Island.

The Federal Government gave grants to Wynyard, Smithton and Latrobe in early 1935 for aerodrome development, with Latrobe getting £250.

The money was used to install more drains and extend the runway to attract the smaller commercial planes which could be used on feeder services to Western Junction. The work continued into 1936, but unfortunately, no regular commercial services would use Latrobe.

The final role for Latrobe Aerodrome was as an emergency landing ground for all aircraft, including RAAF and commercial airlines, e.g. DH86 and DC2s.



In December 1937, Civil Aviation provided a £250 grant to undertake additional runway work. The following year they proposed to take over the aerodrome.

All parties, Civil Aviation, the Aerodrome Committee who still managed the site and had financial liabilities to the Council and its members associated with the earlier loan, and the Latrobe Municipal Council agreed this was the best outcome

The Aerodrome Committee were still responsible for the historic loan to the Council, which was about £150. The Council refused to take over the debt.

The aerodrome was taken over by Civil Aviation in September 1939, after the legalities associated with the land lease were sorted out. Civil aviation maintained the site and the Aerodrome committee were allowed to gain income from the grazing rights.

In March 1944, Civil Aviation advised that it was terminating its control of the aerodrome as it had no longer any use for it. It wasn't considered suitable for an emergency landing ground for the bigger planes of the RAAF and ANA, due to the hills that surrounded the site. The Council were not interested in operating the aerodrome, so it was delicensed in late 1944.

After the War, a new Airport at Devonport was developed. Work commenced in 1948 and the first large plane landed June 1950

In conclusion, why did Latrobe fail as a viable aerodrome?

The answer is a combination of technology's continual advancement making small aerodromes unattractive to commercial operators. In July 1938, the Latrobe Municipal Council, meeting summed up the issues when discussing the problem:

They were within 20 minutes flying of Launceston. Much of the advantage of air travel over road travel had disappeared owing to the provision of bituminised roads and high powered cars. As a result, intra-State services had disappeared. In regard to inter-State services, they were up against Launceston and Hobart

This article is available on our [website](http://www.tahs.org.au).



Swansea Demon Tragedy No 2

By W Dearing

In our last newsletter we wrote the story of the tragic death of two spectators at an air show at Swansea on Tasmania's east coast.

The two spectators killed were Mrs Louisa Cotton and her daughter Jean, who were stuck by a RAAF Hawker Demon aircraft, that failed to become airborne. Mrs Cotton was attending the air show with her husband, daughter Jean and younger son Maxwell. Both her husband and son were unharmed but fate was yet to play a further cruel blow to the east coast family.

Maxwell Tylney Cotton was born in May 1921 but with the outbreak of World War 2 enlisted in the RAAF in April 1941 aged 19 years as a trainee pilot. Maxwell received his initial flying instruction with No 7 Elementary Flying Training School at Western Junction and on completion was transferred to Halifax, Canada to undertake his operational training.

Maxwell embarked for the UK in October 1941 and after a brief posting to No 75 Squadron joined No 263 Squadron RAF and began his operational flying as a pilot of a Westland Whirlwind in July 1942.



Courtesy Australian War Memorial

The Westland Whirlwind was the first cannon-armed fighter for the RAF, first flown in October 1938 and at the production stage by 1940. It was a twin engine heavy fighter (also able to function as a fighter bomber with 500-pound bombload). With four 20mm Hispano cannons in the nose, it was more powerful than an eight-gunned fighter like the Spitfire or Hurricane. It was fast, matching or exceeding the current Spitfire's maximum speed, but



performed best at low altitude and was used for convoy escort and against small targets in the English Channel and northern France. Only 114 were produced (compared with over 20,000 Spitfires).

No. 263 Squadron flew Whirlwinds until the end of 1943, with the three years' operating the type being spent in the west of the country: two years in airfields around Wiltshire, Dorset and Gloucestershire, six months in south Wales, and six months in Devon and Cornwall. Apart from periods of training and "rest and recuperation," the squadron's operations involved: air-ground attacks on airfields, railways and roads in northern France; air-sea attacks on enemy shipping (E-boats and armed trawlers); sea convoy escort; and bomber escort.



Photo courtesy Imperial War Museum

Maxwell proved to be a fearless pilot who, as this record of incidents, recalls.

"On the 28th April 1943 during a Roadstead operation, flying Whirlwind P6981 he was hit but managed to return safely to base where an 18inch hole was discovered in his starboard wing. Again, on the 23rd May 1943, he managed to return to base with his starboard tank holed by an unexploded 20 mill shell. Thirty gallons of fuel flowed out before the tank sealed itself. The Whirlwind was found to have a fuselage peppered with holes. After four attempts, and with his rudder partially jammed he managed to safely land his damaged aircraft."

(Extract from 263 Squadron's Operational Reports)



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On the 15th June 1943 at 5:43am Maxwell, leading his section of 4 Whirlwinds, took off for an armed reconnaissance in the Channel Island area. Sighting a convoy of four minesweepers and an armed trawler they engaged the enemy despite heavy and accurate flak. Maxwell dropped his bomb accurately but was hit by the flak. His aircraft was seen to be diving away in a ball of flame and disintegrated as it hit the sea. Observing pilots concluded he would have perished in the incident.

His body was never recovered and he is commemorated on the Runnymede Air Forces Memorial

On the 6th July 1942 Pilot Officer Maxwell Tylney Cotton was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.



With Maxwell's death fate closed a tragic series of events for Swansea's Cotton family. A wife, a daughter and a son all taken by aviation incidents. A family's tragic story in Tasmania's aviation history.

This article is available on our [website](https://www.tahs.org.au).



Leviathans of the Air - Part 3 – The Bristol Brabazon

By W. Dearing

The Bristol Type 167 Brabazon was a large British piston-engined propeller-driven airliner designed by the Bristol Aeroplane Company to fly transatlantic routes between the UK and the United States. The type was named Brabazon after the Brabazon Committee and its chairman, Lord Brabazon of Tara, who had developed the specification to which the airliner was designed.



File photo of first Brabazon

While Bristol had studied the prospects of developing very large aircraft as bomber aircraft prior to and during the Second World War, it was the release of a report compiled by the Brabazon Committee which had led the company to adapting its larger bomber proposal into a prospective large civil airliner to meet the Type I specification for a very large airliner for the long-distance transatlantic route. Initially designated as the Type 167, the proposed aircraft was furnished with a huge 25 ft (8 m)-diameter fuselage containing full upper and lower decks on which passengers would be seated in luxurious conditions; it was powered by an arrangement of eight Bristol Centaurus radial engines which drove a total of eight paired contra-rotating propellers set on four forward-facing nacelles.

Bristol decided to submit the Type 167 proposal to meet Air Ministry Specification 2/44; following a brief evaluation period, a contract to build a pair of prototypes was awarded to Bristol. At the time of its construction, the Brabazon was one of the largest aeroplanes ever



built, being sized roughly between the much later Airbus A300 and Boeing 767 airliners. Despite its vast size, the Brabazon was designed to carry a total of only 100 passengers, each one being allocated their own spacious area about the size of the entire interior of a small car. On 4 September 1949, the first prototype conducted its maiden flight. In addition to participating in a flight test programme in support to intended production aircraft, the prototype made high-profile public flying displays at the 1950 Farnborough Airshow, Heathrow Airport, and the 1951 Paris Air Show.

However, the Brabazon was unable to attract any firm commitments for the type due to the high cost per seat mile compared to the alternatives. Being unable to attract any orders, the aircraft was a commercial failure. On 17 July 1953, Duncan Sandys, the Minister of Supply, announced that the Brabazon had been cancelled due to a lack of military or civil orders for the type. In the end, only the single prototype was flown; it was broken up in 1953 for scrap, along with the incomplete turboprop-powered Brabazon Mk.II.

As one aviation writer put it; "If the DC-3 was the aircraft that got it all right, the Brabazon in contrast got it all wrong".



File photo of Brabazon's Cockpit



General characteristics

- **Crew** 6 - 12
- **Capacity:** 100 passengers
- **Length:** 177 ft (54 m)
- **Wingspan:** 230 ft (70 m)
- **Height:** 50 ft (15 m)
- **Empty weight:** 145,100 lb (65,816 kg)
- **Max takeoff weight:** 290,000 lb (131,542 kg)
- **Fuel capacity:** 13,650 imp gallons (16,393 US gallons; 62,054 litres)
- **Powerplant:** 8 × Bristol Centaurus 18-cylinder air-cooled radial sleeve-valve piston engines, 2,650 hp (1,980 kW) each paired, driving contra-props through combining gearboxes
- **Propellers:** 3-bladed Rotol, 16 ft (4.9 m) diameter fully-feathering contra-rotating propellers
- **Maximum speed:** 300 mph (480 km/h, 260 kn) at 25,000 ft (7,620 m)
- **Cruise speed:** 250 mph (400 km/h, 220 kn) at 25,000 ft (7,620 m)
- **Range:** 5,500 mi (8,900 km, 4,800 n/miles)
- **Service ceiling:** 25,600 feet (7600 metres)
- **Rate of Climb:** 750 ft/min



File photo of the Bristol Brabazon under construction. (Photo courtesy of British Aeroplane Company)

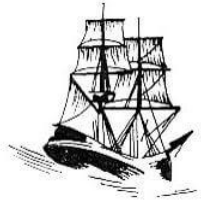


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“FLYING BY THE SEAT OF THEIR PANTS”

26 DECEMBER 2022 – 30 APRIL 2023



FURNEAUX MUSEUM
Emita, Flinders Island, Tasmania



PIONEERS, TRIUMPHS AND TRAGEDIES OF BASS STRAIT AVIATION

From the first Bass Strait crossing flight to the development of commercial flights in 1932, in wooden open cockpit aircraft carrying two passengers, to the luxury of all metal DC-3 aircraft



in the later 1930's this travelling exhibition presented by the Tasmanian Aviation Historical Society and the Furneaux Museum of Flinders Island vividly recounts the history and impact commercial aviation had on the Bass Strait Islands from 1919 until 1939.

Displayed at the Furneaux Museum on Flinders Island the exhibition contains history surrounding the development of aircraft, the airstrips, the impact aviation had on the island communities, and the tragedies that befell the challenge that was aviation in the early twentieth century. The challenges, the vagaries of the Bass Strait weather and the notorious roaring forties are all superbly presented at the Furneaux Museum Flinders Island in January 2023.



"Miss Flinders" on the left and "Miss Currie" on the right two of the pioneers of Bass Strait aviation

So, make sure you obtain your "boarding pass" to this celebration of the development of commercial aviation between Tasmania and the Bass Strait Islands.

For Tasmanian folk don't be disappointed. On conclusion of the Flinders Island exhibition, we are hopeful we can make the display available in Launceston, King Island and perhaps other venues in Northern Tasmania and Hobart. More information in future Newsletters.

"FLYING BY THE SEAT OF THEIR PANTS"



FURNEAUX MUSEUM
Emita, Flinders Island, Tasmania

26 DECEMBER 2022 – 30 APRIL 2023



DO YOU REMEMBER?

This month's "Do you remember?" allows the editor some theatrical license!

For many of our Tasmanian and mainland readers, the name Skyrace Tasmania revives visions of aircraft racing around pylons, Bob Hoover and his Aero Commander routine and a wonderful group of aviation devotees at the picture-perfect venue of "Valleyfield" Epping Forest.

In June of this year whilst the editor was holidaying on Norfolk Island a visitor and an historic aircraft arrived (due to bad weather on route) that stirred the memories of this great event.



FILE PHOTO OF P51 MUSTANG "DOVE OF PEACE" NOW REGISTERED VH-LUI AT NORFOLK ISLAND

LANDING AT NORFOLK ISLAND

The aircraft formally bearing New Zealand registration ZK-SAS was enroute from Wanaka New Zealand to her new home in Wangaratta when bad weather curtailed a direct flight from Wanaka.

The aircraft was originally flown by the RAAF as A68-674 prior to going to New Zealand but has since been purchased by Doug Hamilton at Wangaratta and was flown from New Zealand by Doug's good mate Steve Death, both keen competitors during Skyrace Tasmania days. The flight from Norfolk Island was via Coolangatta thence Wangaratta and her new home.



FILE PHOTO OF THE "CADILLAC" OF THE SKY AT NORFOLK ISLAND.

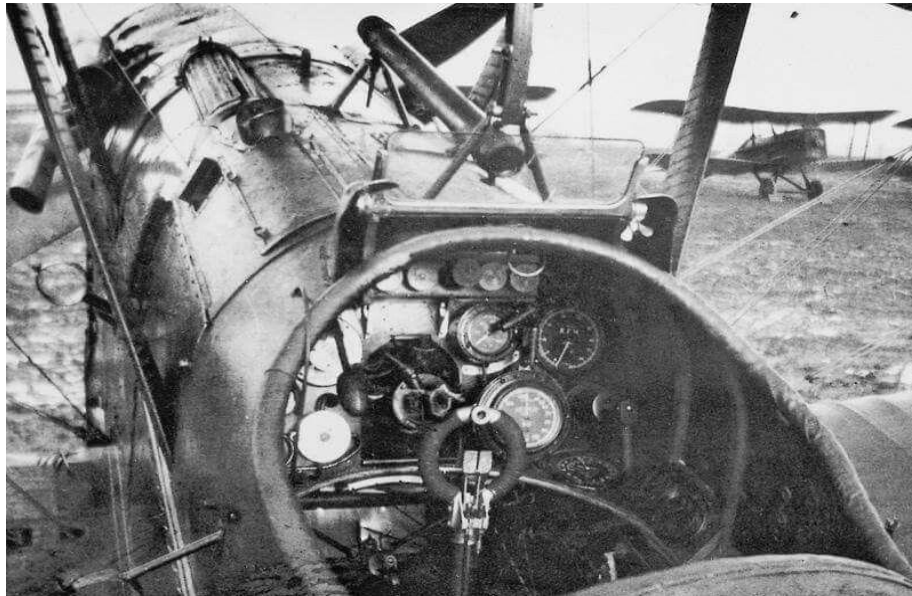
FOOTNOTE:

For those who are wondering the distance from Norfolk Island to Coolangatta is 1,410 kms or 867 miles, all over water with only one engine.



History – Aircraft Cockpits Then and Now!

From that first tentative flight by the Wright Bros almost 130 years ago aviation has undergone a phenomenal development none the least the aircraft's cockpit or flight deck as these photos show.



File photos above cockpit of a World War 1 S.E.5 fighter and below the cockpit of today's modern F/A 18 Super Hornet.





File photos above of Comet DH 106 Comet 4 cockpit and below the Airbus A380.

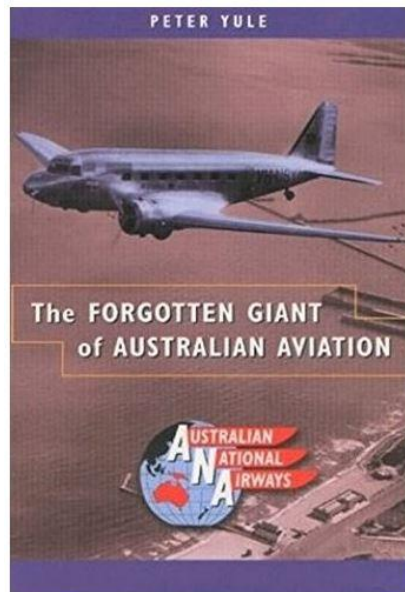




The Classifieds

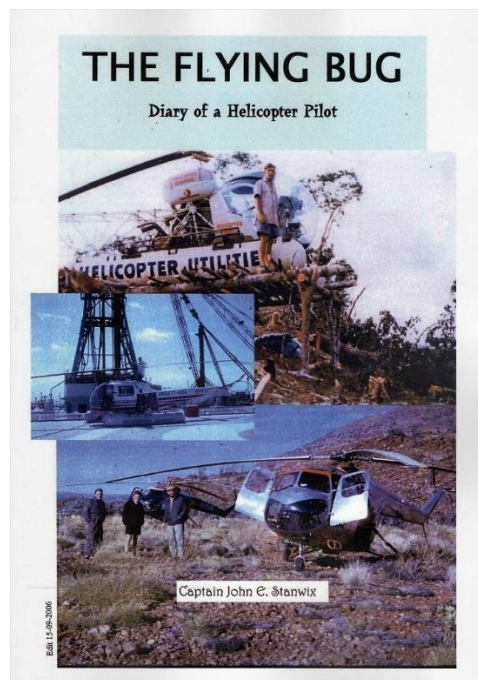
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The Classifieds



Caps \$20.00

SEE YOU IN DECEMBER!



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