



Tasmanian Aviation Historical Society

Preserving Tasmania's aviation history.



“Roaring Forties”

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc

HANGAR 17, LAUNCESTON AIRPORT.

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 13 - MARCH 2023

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**TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

**NEWSLETTER NUMBER 13 MARCH 2023
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VALE: Neil Louis

Tragically we lost Neil in December of last year after a long battle with illness. Neil was a founding member of TAHS and his dedication and efforts in the formation of the society will long be remembered. Our thoughts are with Neil's family.

“ROARING FORTIES”

We have renamed our Newsletter **“ROARING FORTIES”** in addition to reformatting the publication in celebration of four years since the formation of TAHS.

This issue also contains a continuation of stories presented in previous publications and a look back over our first four years, our achievements and our future.

The annual ***PRESIDENT'S REPORT*** is presented and a special article on **Neil Louis**, his life and his involvement with TAHS.

TAHS - Office Bearers, 2023.

President:	Andrew Johnson.
Vice President:	John Brett.
Secretary:	Wayne Dearing
Treasurer:	Cranston Gilbert
Public Officer:	Cranston Gilbert
Webmaster:	Cranston Gilbert
Newsletter Co- Editors:	Wayne Dearing Paul Richards
Exec Committee Officers:	Paul Richards Peter Manktelow

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We trust you enjoy this newsletter and remember if you, or your club, have any stories or experiences you would like to share in future newsletters please contact us.

Wayne Dearing, Senior Editor

**TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL
SOCIETY 2022 PRESIDENT'S REPORT**



Andrew Johnson President TAHS

February 2023.

Writing this report and reflecting on the range of activities the society have been busy with over the last twelve months, it's pleasing to conclude we are addressing our constitutional objectives in so many ways.

Recognising, documenting and promoting Tasmanian aviation stories was supported this year by a number of significant Tasmanian aviation anniversaries being recognised. Ninety years since the start of commercial aviation in Tasmania with Laurie Johnson in Miss Flinders and the Holyman brothers in Miss Currie. The media took a strong interest in these stories allowing the TAHS to share on line, on the radio, television and in the newspaper. Talks were also given to community groups such as Rotary on these stories. The inaugural In the Air conference, held at Launceston Grammar School, was a huge success, attracting a number of quality speakers from around Australia sharing their aviation stories. An important relationship with the school was reinforced with possibilities for further activities promoting aviation in the future.

Of course, our quarterly newsletters continue to recognise and promote Tasmanian aviation. Always an informative enjoyable read and an important communication tool to our membership. The volume of content is

undeniably generous with a great deal of research going into the stories delivered. A huge thank you to all contributors. Investigating and publishing historical items also continues strongly through our website, Facebook, newsletters, and through media outlets with the marking of a number of significant anniversaries as I have already mentioned. The society's collection continues to grow with donations and acquisitions of written material, photos and objects, including another aircraft! Rob Gard's Auster "Rosie" was generously donated to the society and is now included in our collection.

Important work has been done this year developing our relationship with the Northern Midlands council to ensure the Harold Gatty Memorial in Campbell Town is retained and maintained. Gatty, one of Tasmania's pioneer aviators, made significant contributions to aviation globally.

The exhibition, Flying by the Seat of their Pants, addressed a number of our constitutional objectives. Partnering with the Furneaux Museum, provided additional support which helped promote the aviation stories to a greater audience. Again, strong media attention has helped this and as the exhibition tours, this audience will continue to grow. Developing a new website will also assist in reaching a greater audience. www.bassstraitflight.au Successfully addressing our objectives does rely on generous input from our membership and external groups which was particularly strong this year. We have been very fortunate to have such generous financial and in-kind support from many groups. This support has made major projects like our In the Air seminar and Flying by the Seat of their Pants exhibition possible.

Grant funding is also crucial to achieving our goals and I am pleased to say this year we were again successful in attracting a number of grants. The development of an exhibition plan and curatorial guidance for Flying by the Seat of their Pants came from the Roving Curator program. This was complimented by funding

from the Cultural Heritage Grant which contributed directly towards exhibition costs.

We were successful in securing grant funding from the AMAGA CHART grant to have a travel case fabricated that will allow us to tour aviation stories around the state on an intimate scale. A “roving display” like this has the potential to address many of our constitutional obligations. I look forward to seeing this display case out on the road in the near future.

The TAHS have continued to build on and establish positive, supportive partnerships this year.

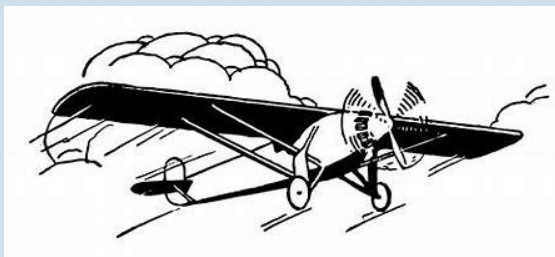
Launceston Distillery are very much a part of our journey, as is Launceston Grammar School and Launceston Airport. A new and exciting collaboration has begun with the University of Tasmania, who we are working with towards the development of an aviation museum in Tasmania. Helicopter Resources in Launceston have also been enormously supportive this year. The Christmas get together at their Launceston base was a great way to end the year in an aviation rich environment.

Tours of the facility and a ride in a Bell 47 for one very lucky member ensured an interesting and enjoyable evening event.

The next twelve months are looking very exciting with many projects underway and opportunities to share our Tasmanian Aviation stories being uncovered.

Regards,

Andrew Johnson – President



REMEMBERING A FOUNDING MEMBER NEIL LOUIS - A TRIBUTE.



On the 27th November 2022, TAHS lost one of its founding members after a long illness.

Neil Robert Louis may not be a familiar name to many members as his health prevented an active involvement in the activities of the society in later years. However, Neil was integral in the initial formation of the Tasmanian Aviation Historical Society.

Our Society was formed in mid 2019 but the origins date back to 2014. Launceston Distillery partner Chris Byrne, started researching the rich history of Hangar 17 at Launceston Airport (which they were leasing) and all paths were leading to the Evandale Historical Society, of which Neil was a member and researcher. An eventual meeting between Chris and Neil ensued which sowed the first seed.

Over the next few years, other local aviation people were contacted and Neil produced some concepts for an aviation historical society. A meeting was called to bring all interested people together on 9th July 2018 at Hangar 17. to discuss the feasibility of forming a Society. As they say, “the rest is history” and in August 2019, the Tasmanian Aviation Historical Society was officially born.

An aviation “nut”, Neil worked for Qantas in Sydney and remained with them for 28 years. His positions over that time included Reservations, Recruitment and Human Resources Manager. He was member number

29 of the Historical Aircraft Restoration Society in NSW. He joined HARS at the time they started restoring a Lockheed Constellation in the USA. The “Connie” was a very important aircraft to Qantas in the 1950’s and HARS painted their example in Qantas colours and flew it out to Australia in 1996.

Neil was born in Sydney, but moved to Hobart with his mother and sister when he was 7 years old. His Mum was actually born in Launceston so while we thought Neil was a “ring in”, he did have his roots in Tasmania. Neil moved back to Sydney early in his working life.

In 2006, Neil returned to Tasmania after parting ways with his first wife. A long time friend and previous member of TAHS, Peter Riley, apparently suggested to Neil to come to Perth as there were “lots of rich widows” living there. Neil first saw Lyn on a walk and while he wanted to say hello, Lyn wouldn’t look at him! The pair finally met at the Evandale History Society and in 2014 they married. Peter’s idea obviously worked, but Lyn claims she wasn’t one of those “rich” widows!

After Neil joined the Evandale History Society and while researching the history of the Evandale area, he discovered the 7th Elementary Flying Training School, which was set up in the early years of the Second World War. The school trained 1800 pilots of which 10 lost their lives. No doubt Neil’s enthusiasm level would have been high and he delved into researching the school and the outcome a few years later was the construction of a memorial in the grounds of the Society. The memorial was unveiled on the 21st August 2010 in front of 20 veterans of the school and many invited guests. RAAF Group Captain Glen Coy performed the unveiling, which was followed by a flypast of the Roulettes.

Over the years Neil was a member of many committees, including Aviation History of Australia (AHSA), HARS, Evandale Penny Farthings and Evandale History Society. He was also a joint researcher in “Aussie Airliners”, a web based history of all Australian Airliners.

The last few years of Neil’s life saw him in and out of hospitals and in constant pain. All the while Lyn was a great support and Neil never gave up and kept his wicked sense of humour. Eventually he succumbed and was fittingly farewelled in a private service on the 6th December 2022.

A brave and wonderful man gone far too early and TAHS owes him a great debt of gratitude.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor. Being fairly new to the TAHS I had struggled a bit with who sits where and exactly which hat our executive and sub-committee members wear. Now that we have had our AGM there are changes which will show up in the minutes. However for simplicity would it be possible to have published a stand-alone list of our Patrons, Executive Committee members and sub-committee members names along with their particular duties and responsibilities.

Peter Manktelow

TAHS. OUR FOURTH BIRTHDAY

The beginning

On the 9th July 2018, Chris Byrne, the late Neil Louis and a group of aviation enthusiasts met and conducted a feasibility meeting with the view of forming a Tasmanian aviation history group. The meeting was appropriately held in Hangar 17, the structure that was built by the Holyman brothers in 1933 and is now the home of Launceston Distillery.

The group was dedicated to the recording, collection and preservation of Tasmania’s aviation history and so the “*Tasmanian Aviation Historical Society*” was born.

Gradually the group began planning for the future and in February 2020 the Georgetown “Wings and Things” event proved to be the perfect venue for TAHS to be introduced to the public. A display of memorabilia was well accepted, receiving positive public awareness and an influx of new members.



Above and below our first venture and display at Georgetown's "Wings and Things"

Source: TAHS file photos.



Miss Flinders

In March 2020, *Miss Flinders* became a definitive challenge for the fledgling society. Members of TAHS made a commitment as a result of the society being gifted the Desoutter aircraft, as part of their responsibility to address the lack of Tasmania's aviation history.

The aircraft was used to operate the first commercial air service between Launceston and Flinders Island. Arguably the forerunner of what ultimately became Australian National Airways, the aircraft had been hung at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery prior to its removal in 1997. With support from politicians, both state and local, Launceston airport and historical bodies, TAHS became custodians of the aircraft. Carefully repackaged, the aircraft was delivered to Hangar 17 in late March 2020 where, on a specially built storage platform, the aircraft was stored.



Miss Flinders in storage at Hangar 17 2020.

Source: TAHS file photo.

Safely stored in Hangar 17, thoughts of the TAHS executive quickly turned to the possibility of placing the aircraft on display.

The opportunity came, after discussions with Launceston airport, of returning the aircraft for display in the main terminal at the airport. As part of the airport's 90th anniversary, the members (under the leadership of the Artlab Conservator) began the slow and meticulous task of reassembling the Desoutter inside the airport passenger terminal in February 2021.

The joint project funded by the state government and the Launceston airport saw the aircraft finally raised in the main terminal, a task that was completed in early December 2021.



Miss Flinders proudly "hanging" at Launceston Airport

Source: TAHS file photo

Seminar: "In the Air"

June 2022 saw a different programme aimed at introducing the public, not only to Tasmania's aviation history, but to notable aviators and their careers. So was established the seminar:

“IN THE AIR”.

The brainchild of member Paul Richards AM, the seminar was appropriately held at the Launceston Church Grammar School, whose past students include notable forefathers of Tasmanian aviation, including Hudson Fysh, the co-founder of QANTAS and Victor Holyman, of Holyman Airways fame.

Guest speakers included TAHS historian Lindsay Millar, Mac Cottrell and Bill Mattes, both ex RAAF pilots with a combined 68 years of experience. Joining them was a QANTAS pilot Steve Murray and Stuart Bryce, pilot, administrator and winemaker.

The programme included a tour of the school’s aviation studies equipment and concluded with a dinner in the school’s dining room.

Attracting not only TAHS members but the general public as well, the seminar proved a great success with plans afoot for the seminar to become an annual event.

**PLEASE SUPPORT “IN THE AIR” -2023
Friday 8 September 2023
REGISTRATION OUT SOON**

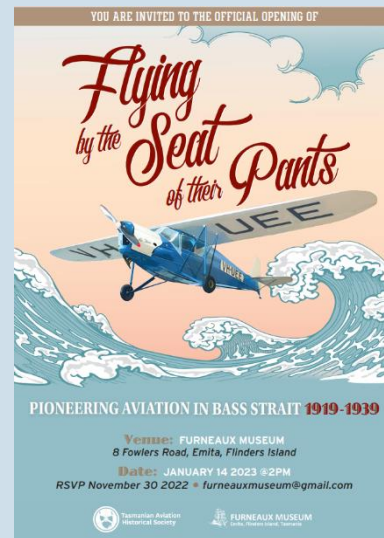


“Flying by the Seat of their Pants”

This somewhat iconic phrase defines perfectly the early aviators and the challenges that faced them on a daily basis.

Tasmania was significantly dependant on sea transport in the early 1900’s, but the Furneaux and King Islands were totally reliant on this mode of transport.

Enter “Flying by the Seat of their Pants”



What started as discussions relating to the impact aviation had on the Furneaux group of islands, led to a travelling exhibition being developed by the TAHS president, Andrew Johnson.

The exhibition catalogues the development of aviation from 1919 until 1939, the aircraft, pilots and the impact it had on the lives of the islanders.

A joint project of the Furneaux Museum of Flinders Island and TAHS, the programme was officially opened at the Furneaux Museum by Nick Duigan MLC on the 14 January 2023.

After some months on the island, the exhibition travels back to Launceston and in September 2023 it goes on display at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery Inveresk. From there it will move over to King Island in December 2023.

The travelling exhibition is logistically the most ambitious undertaking by TAHS, but it is hoped that this may be the start of a future museum. It

is hoped that following these locations the exhibition may well travel to other venues throughout Tasmania, including TMAG..



Two photos of the displays at the Furneaux Museum Flinders Island

Source: Andrew Johnson Collection



The Harold Gatty Memorial, Campbell Town

In the northern midlands township of Campbell Town is a monument dedicated to the preservation of the memory of Harold Gatty, once described by Charles Lindberg as the “prince of navigators”. Born in Campbell Town in 1903, he rose to fame as the navigator of the *Winnie May* when he and pilot Wiley Post, circumnavigated the world in a little over 8 days.

The elements and time have had a significant impact causing substantial deuteriation of the plaques, flagpole and world sphere that form the memorial’s display.



The Harold Gatty Memorial Campbell Town

Source: Wayne Dearing Collection

A section of the TAHS constitution allows us to assist like-minded associations with the preservation of Tasmanian aviation history. With this in mind, discussions with the Campbell Town Museum and Information Centre commenced, offering TAHS assistance in formulating a plan to restore the memorial and the surrounding grounds.

Discussions with the Northern Midlands Council resulted in a plan being submitted for restoration of the area. The Hobart TAFE College and American/Australian Association were both contacted for assistance in the restoration of both plaques, the flag pole and the world sphere. These items were part of the initial donations that saw the memorial erected in 1960.



The brass plaque constructed and donated by the then Hobart Technical College in 1960.

Source: Jill Dearing Collection

Further discussions are underway with the hope that, with TAHS assistance, the grounds and monument can be restored by the end of 2023.

The project is a further commitment by TAHS and its members to ensure the conservation of Tasmania's rich aviation history.

The future

The first four years of TAHS have seen four major projects, 12 newsletters and 5 special newsletters aimed at collecting and preserving our aviation history. Honorary membership has been accepted by other historical societies and aero clubs, that allows networking in the preservation of our history. Together with aviation books and merchandise that promote our club's image, the stage is set for the club's future.

It would be remiss of the editor not to admit that the ultimate goal of TAHS is the formation of a Tasmanian Aviation Museum with static displays of the aircraft that have helped forge our history.

Early discussions with Launceston airport management and owners of some aircraft that could possibly go on display have been undertaken, but the long-term goal is still some distance off.

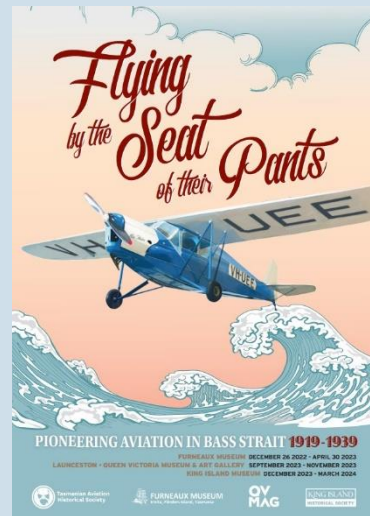
Until then, we intend to continue collecting and preserving our aviation history, its aircraft and aviators.

The seminar **"IN THE AIR"** will become an annual event and in addition we are investigating arranging functions to commemorate specific dates and achievements.

We will gradually increase our range of merchandise and books. With the construction of our travelling exhibition, we hopefully can visit other areas in Tasmania to allow the entire state to share in our aviation's history.

For TAHS this is just the beginning!!!!

TAHS TRAVELLING EXHIBITION



"Flying by the Seat of their Pants" Flinders Island opening Saturday 14 January

Saturday 14 January 2023 saw the official opening, at the Furneaux Museum, Flinders Island, of a travelling exhibition commemorating the history of pioneering aviation across Bass Strait from 1919 through to the outbreak of World War 2 in 1939.

Appropriately named *"Flying by the Seat of their Pants"*, the display was a collaborative effort by TAHS and the Furneaux Museum on Flinders Island. The display, designed and built by TAHS president Andrew Johnson, skilfully details the dangers faced by both men and machines that ultimately provided a means of transport, to King Island, Flinders Island and the Australian mainland, that today we take for granted.

Based on a time line depicted on eight panels, the display skilfully portrays the history of those early flights and also shows the enormous impact aviation has had on the islands and our island state of Tasmania. The introduction of regular and safe air transport to and from the islands, eased the continual reliance of sea transport and importantly provided additional medical care in the form of aerial evacuation. All of this history is on display at the exhibition.



Photos depicting the display and memorabilia on Flinders Island

Source: TAHS Archives

It was appropriate that the official opening of the exhibition was performed by Tasmanian politician Nick Duigan, MLC, whose family played an important role in the development of Australia's early aviation. Mr Duigan himself

was a keen aviator and had a fortunate escape following an aircraft accident on Flinders Island some years ago. His passion for aviation and Flinders Island was noticeably apparent in his opening remarks.



Nick Duigan, MLC, at the exhibition's official launch.

Source: TAHS archives

Whilst the exhibition was a collective effort, the advice, assistance and enthusiasm provided by Linda MacGregor and her team at the Furneaux Museum and ably supported by Melissa Smith from Arts Tasmania, ensured the exhibition's success.

In addition to Linda and her group the support of the Flinders Island residents cannot go unrewarded. Their involvement and interest in the project typifies their approach to life on the island.

We wish to acknowledge and sincerely thank the organisations who have supported the exhibition.



Part of the TAHS, Furneaux and Arts Tasmania Team at the launch.

Source: TAHS archives

This activity was assisted through Arts Tasmania.

The exhibition will remain on the island until 30 April 2023. After this time, it will be transported back to Launceston and in September, of this year, be reopened in the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery Inveresk. Following this the presentation will move to King Island and open at their museum in December, where it will remain on display until March 2024.

After these venues it is hoped that the display may well tour to other, Tasmanian or even mainland, regions.

**EXHIBITION OPENING DAY
THROUGH THE EYE OF THE CAMERA**



Part of the crowd at the official opening

Source: TAHS archives.



Nick Duigan MLC and TAHS President Andrew Johnson

Source: TAHS archives



An interested admirer

Source: TAHS archives



**A Light snack after the opening.
AND THEY SAY IT'S TOUGH LIVING ON
THE ISLAND!**

Source: TAHS archives

**MY LIFE FLYING HELICOPTER'S
PART 2**

Peter Manktelow

The period of time I was with Peter Hookway's "Hookway Aviation Pty Ltd" was from September 1977 to the end of April 1980. My position was titled as Operations Manager/pilot.

The preceding and the following article is based on my “aging” memory and a heavy reliance on my log books.



Peter Hookway. Entrepreneur, eccentric or pioneer???

A little bit about the late Peter Hookway. In my humble opinion, he was a Tasmanian aviation pioneer in setting up Hookway Aviation with a permanent base in Hobart. No one had set up a Tasmanian based helicopter company before Peter. Some would suggest that he was somewhat eccentric. You may recall the ex RAAF Canberra bombers parked at Essendon many years ago. They were Peter's. As were the ex RAN/Fleet Air Arm Trackers at West Sale. Still there to this day rotting away parked outside. There was some suggestion that Peter may also have been involved with the Maralinga Mustangs. (The Hookway family name appears quite a bit around Scottsdale) I first met Peter at the Holiday Inn at Tullamarine. I was there for an interview with Ansett for a position flying their Sikorsky 61 helicopter passenger operation out of Proserpine. The late John Stanwix (“The Flying Bug/Diary of a Helicopter Pilot”) was on the interview board and I do recall I may have been a bit flippant to cause John to suggest to me that the job was not “all beer and skittles”. Anyhow, I didn't get the Ansett job but did get hired by Peter, who was in a bit of a state of shock as all his pilots from Hobart were also at the Tullamarine Ansett interview. Who could blame him. The Ansett helicopter position was a plum job even if it was not all beer and skittles.



Sikorsky S61N

SOURCE: Courtesy of Okanagan Helicopters Re-union

In my last article I mentioned the casino shuttle flights. While this produced a good cash flow, it was not the only work the company undertook. The Tasmanian Government wanted helicopters permanently based in Tasmania, particularly during the winter months. Traditionally the mainland operators would come down to Tassie during the summer months and then depart again before Autumn. This left Tasmania with a long wait time if an emergency occurred requiring a helicopter. Fixed wing aircraft could do wonders but... (eg Dick Richey could almost hover his Super Cub in a strong headwind and a video clip exists somewhere of Dick rescuing some fishermen off a beach on the west coast. Amazingly the aircraft on take-off along the beach had a wave break over the little Piper, which almost disappeared however it spluttered out the other side and got airborne) Aeroplanes cannot hover and get in to the tight spots/confined areas that a helicopter can.



“AEROPLANES CAN NOT HOVER IN TO THE TIGHT SPOTS/CONFINED AREAS THAT A HELICOPTOR CAN”

SOURCE: Okanagan Re-union.

At this time, the State Emergency Service (SES) was born and an arrangement was made between the SES and Hookway Aviation, that Hookway could carry out work away from Hobart but still within Tasmania. If called upon to carry out a SAR (Search and Rescue), then Hookway had to suspend its commercial operation and immediately proceed to carry out the emergency flight, whatever it may have been. In other words, the helicopter was not on a dedicated contract with the State Government. I cannot recall when The Bank of New South Wales/Westpac came into the picture as a part financial sponsor. I do not believe there was much money in the SES arrangement overall.

The back seat crewing for SAR was primarily from the Tasmanian Police Rescue Squad, rarely from Ambulance and on at least one occasion, from the Police Drug Squad.

We were not winch equipped. That came much later but we did train the Police to rappel from the helicopter, which at least allowed us to get POLSAR in to very confined areas. Getting them back out again required them to either move to a more suitable area or cut a helipad out of the sometimes very thick scrub. I wish I could say that the SES enjoyed an amicable relationship with the Police. Not so and the end result was that the Police eventually took control of the SES and the rescue helicopter. It made sense. They had the SAR experience and qualified personnel in all facets of SAR operations.

On 11th November 1977 Peter purchased another Bell 206 VH PHB which was equipped to fly at night, but more importantly, it could carry two stretcher patients and a cramped Ambulance or Police Officer. It was also equipped with a heater, which was a “heaven send” for flying in Tasmania during winter. I ferried the aircraft from Bell Helicopters in Brisbane to Hobart. Route was Brisbane - Coffs Harbour - Port Macquarie - Sydney - Canberra - Cooma - West Sale - Flinders Island (Whitemark) - Launceston - Hobart.



The fleet of 3 Bell 206B Jetrangers parked near the Ansett hangar at Llanherne (Hobart). Looks like the late Tony Taylor (Engineer) in the foreground and “moi” in the background. Note the signage on VH PHB “Tasmanian Emergency Service”

SOURCE: P Manktelow collection.

So, in my early days with Hookway, our little group consisted of Barry Costa (Chief Pilot), myself and Ric Dorney (pilot). Ric later left for the Ansett S61 Proserpine job mentioned earlier. Nigel Osborn (pilot) then came on the scene. John Wilson was our Chief Engineer. John Grant ran the office, which was a tiny “hole in the wall” to the south and abutting the main Llanherne terminal at Hobart. It was previously the catering kitchen for the airlines in the days when the in-flight breakfast consisted of bacon and eggs, as opposed to today’s scant muffin and orange juice. In April 1978 we moved to an annex attached to Bender’s (Crop Spraying) hangar at Cambridge

Nigel Osborn has to be in his mid to late 80’s by now. He has an amazing helicopter history dating back to the 60’s. He carried out an amazing rescue on Macquarie Island, which I will cover later. I hope I can do justice to that story and will try once again to get Nigel to put pen to paper, as he was the man in the hot seat at the time.

So by this time dear reader, you must have assumed that I would not be launching into another aerodynamics lesson sorry.....but it is a necessary step in your education regarding these peculiar flying machines.

AERODYNAMICS LESSON – AUTOROTATION

THE AUTOROTATION, or what should happen when the engine fails in a single engine helicopter (or if both engines fail in a multi engine helicopter. Highly unlikely but it has happened!)

When the engine fails in a single engine machine, the pilot's reaction must be immediate. The collective pitch lever must be lowered quickly to its minimum position, which will put the main rotor pitch angle at or near zero. If the collective is not lowered, drag will slow the rotor rpm to a dangerous level, in which control of the aircraft is lost and it will descend like the proverbial brick outhouse.

So, in entering autorotation, the airspeed, if in the cruise, is reduced to the optimum autorotation speed, usually about 60 to 70 knots depending on the type of aircraft. The aircraft will descend at 2 to 3,000 feet per minute. It will not fall out of the sky! The aircraft can still be manoeuvred but careful attention must be paid to the rotor rpm. For example, in a tight turn it will increase so some small collective input may be needed to stop an over speed of the main rotor. The airflow is now coming up through the main rotor which keeps it turning and also providing lift. So far so good.

Let's say we are at 3,000 feet when the engine quits. That will give us about 60 seconds before we reach the ground and we will cover about 1 mile in forward distance. Now comes the magic part. At about 50 to 100 feet above the ground we raise the nose, which reduces both forward and vertical speed and using the inertia of the main rotor, we pull in collective pitch to further reduce vertical and forward airspeed to zero. You only get one go at pulling collective pitch to "cushion" the landing, so judgement is everything.



Wrecked P2 AHV/HELITRANS (not Hookway) at Yandera PNG.

SOURCE: P Manktelow collection.

The photo of the mangled Bell 206 was of a machine I was flying in the PNG highlands. I was aiming to land (after the engine quit) on a razor back ridge. The left skid made contact with solid ground, but unfortunately the right skid was over tall grass which concealed a small drop off. The aircraft, at touchdown rolled on its right side, otherwise we would have had minimal to no damage. Because we "arrived at the accident site" with zero vertical and zero forward speed, myself and all 3 passengers walked away unscathed, if somewhat shocked. That is the beauty of being able to reduce forward and vertical airspeed to zero by way of the autorotation. After all, it is not the speed that can kill, you but the sudden stop.

The helicopter slinging AHV is an SA315B "Llama". Up until recently, it held the altitude record for a helicopter of 40,820 feet. The Llama was a magnificent lifter. Very powerful but a bit slow in the cruise at 80 knots. The Jetranger was later re-built and went back out to work. If you were ever to have an engine failure in a single engine helicopter, the Jetranger was the ideal machine to do so!



SOURCE: P Manktelow collection

Thus, endeth the second lesson.

Hookway's client list looked something like this.

National Parks and Wildlife Service. All those wooden walkways in the various national parks were all constructed using the helicopters to lift in personnel, equipment and materials.



SOURCE: Hookway Aviation

Forestry Department. Reduction burning using the helicopters was in its infancy. My log book shows a flight with Evan Rolley, the then Forestry Commissioner. He sat in the back seat with the rear door removed and using a cattle drench gun, he injected a certain fluid in to a

used plastic 35 mm film canister, which had a certain crystal chemical in it. It was then tossed out of the helicopter as we slowly hovered forward over the area to be burned. The two chemicals in mixing, created a mini-incendiary device which worked very well. We started quite a large fire. This crude experiment then resulted in a machine which automatically injected the fluid in to "loaded" ping pong balls and ejected them from the helicopter. Sort of like a turtle laying eggs, of course the machine jammed one day which created a bit of worry with a very smoky cabin and cockpit. The latest device is called a drip torch and is attached to a long line under the aircraft, so it is much safer. The chemical used in the drip torch is akin to napalm ie jellified petroleum and falls as a wad of flame.



SOURCE: P Manktelowcollection

The Lands Department hired us frequently for surveying work throughout the state. Most surveying is done from Trig Stations on top of mountains. The aircraft was normally shut down for the time it took to take the various sightings, which gave us time to enjoy the serenity of these locations as well as the magnificent view of the country side below. There was never any shortage of "volunteers" from the pilots when the Lands Department jobs came up, as it was usually over a 3-5 day period away from base, which was a bonus in itself.



SOURCE: Above Okanagan Re-union and below Hookway Aviation



I will continue with the client list in the next newsletter, but leave you with this. The “plum” contract (and most lucrative) in Tasmania, was with the Hydro Electric Commission or “Hydro” for short. Mainland helicopter operators had, in previous years, always won this contract. Hookway Aviation bid each year but to no avail until..... **to be continued.**

HISTORY OF THE TASMANIAN AERO CLUB Part2 “The year that was 1946”

W Dearing

Following the declaration of war, the military commenced taking over properties and buildings for use in the war effort. With the establishment of the 7 Elementary Flying Training School (7 EFTS) at Western Junction airport, the RAAF advised the aero club that it would be taking over the club’s hangar and clubhouse. The clubhouse was to be used as an officer’s mess, with the RAAF “generously” offering to pay for the crockery, cutlery and other clubhouse equipment.

Following this, the committee decided to put the club into recess, closed down all flying operations and storing their three serviceable Gipsy Moths at Cambridge Airport. The committee further decided to continue the services of the club’s secretary, Captain W S Manthei, so that he could maintain the club’s financial records.

The 7 EFTS ceased operations in 1944 and finally closed all operations on 31 August 1945. In 1944 Captain Manthei decided to sell the club’s three DH 60 Gipsy Moths to the Royal Victorian Aero Club who, at that time, was still undertaking flying training for the RAAF. In two years-time this was to prove a be a fortuitous decision as it provided the funds to purchase DH 82 Tiger Moths that were surplus to the RAAF’s needs.

On 20 December 1945 a “Special Meeting” was held in Launceston to reactivate the Aero Club and on 20 January 1946, a new committee was formed under the presidency of Mr D T Oldham.

On 12 February of that year the club purchased the DH 82 Tiger Moths that were surplus to the RAAF’s requirements. The club’s problem though was they were still waiting for the return of their clubhouse and hangar that had been commandeered by the RAAF.

Not to be deterred, the club continued to plan for the return of the club’s flying activities. On 15 February 1946 Mr W Ambery was appointed as the engineer whilst 17 March saw the

appointment of Instructors Laurie Littler and Lloyd Jones, the latter being charged with the operation of the club's Cambridge activities.

On 13 April 1946 the club's two Tiger Moths, VH-AQI and VH-AQL, took to the air resuming their post war flying activities. On 20 May, at an auction of surplus 7 EFTS aircraft, the club and its members purchased additional Tiger Moths. The prices paid varied between 50 and 250 pounds. The club purchased further Tiger Moths to cover their operational requirements in the south and north west of the state.



Above photo of a beautifully restored Gipsy Moth the club's pre-war training aircraft and below a restored RAAF Tiger Moth used post war by the club.

Source: Moorabbin Air Museum and Airlines.



In June 1946, Bass MHR Mr H C Barnard arranged for the club to use one of the four Bellman Hangars, built by the RAAF, for the storage of aircraft and engineering workshops, together with provision of a flight office. In July

of that year the club was advised that their original clubhouse would be retained by the Department of Civil Aviation, to be used as a residence for airport staff. Furthermore, the club's original hangar would also be retained, ultimately for use as an airline terminal.

Once again Mr Barnard came to the negotiation table on behalf of the aero club and achieved the following results:

- The allocation of former 7 EFTS buildings at Western Junction that would replace the buildings that had not been returned to the club.
- The Tasmanian Aero Club will be allocated three Bellman Hangars, one to remain at Western Junction, one to be moved to Wynyard and the other hangar to be reserved for the proposed Devonport aerodrome.
- The club would also be allocated the RAAF hospital, for conversion to a residential clubhouse and the parachute and Link trainer building, complete with Link trainer.

Documentation on the transaction is a little vague, with comments such as "items donated" or "items at a peppercorn rental". Either way, the transactions were a coup for the club.



Mr H C Barnard MHR

Source: Tasmanian Parliament

1946 proved to be a busy time for the reactivated aero club. July saw the appointment of Don McDonald as an instructor and in August, the club recommenced producing editions of their newsletter "Plane Torque", that had begun production in the mid 1930's. To the best of the author's memory, the magazine was still being produced in the early 1990's. The first copy of the revived newsletter recorded the departure of instructor, Laurie Littler, to New South Wales, the retirement of secretary Captain Manthei and an update of flying training.

Information relating to Flying Scholarships available at Launceston, Cambridge and Wynyard, was also notified. The Trustees of the Scholarship Funds advised that each area would be allocated 30 pounds, that would be made available to club members under the age of 30 years, who are undergoing flying training

Work also began on the conversion of the hospital to a residential clubhouse that, on completion, would contain office space, a bar, dining room, dance floor, 6 bedrooms and a residence for a manager.

September saw the committee commence planning for the first post war air pageant, to be held during February 1947 at Western Junction, Cambridge and Wynyard.

November saw the commencement of negotiations that would allow the three divisions of the aero club (Launceston, Hobart and Wynyard) as autonomous bodies, with each body being totally responsible for its own activities.

By the end of 1946, the club had achieved a remarkable transformation and with the growing acceptance of aviation, was confident of its future.

(To be continued – 1950 to 1970)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: The information in this article was provided from Tas Aero Club archival records supplied by TAHS historian Lindsay Millar.

TASMANIAN AIRCRAFT DISASTERS. ANA DC3 VH-AET, CAMBRIDGE AIRPORT 1946

W Dearing

The incident. On Sunday 10 March 1946, one of Australia's worst aircraft accidents occurred. An Australian National Airways (ANA) DC3, registered VH-AET and en-route to Essendon, Victoria, crashed into the waters of Frederick Henry Bay in Southern Tasmania at approximately 8:50pm, less than two minutes after departure from Cambridge Aerodrome.¹



Early aerial of Cambridge Airport

Source: *Par Avion.edu.au*

Observers reported the aircraft's take-off and initial climb out appeared normal with both engines operating properly. At about 400 feet, the aircraft began a left hand turn before descending steeply, impacting the sea some 300 yards beyond the water's edge. It was estimated the aircraft had a descent rate of approximately 4000ft per minute on impact.² **The flight crew.** The flight crew consisted of the captain Thomas Spence, aged 30, who had about 3,500 hours flying experience and had been a captain of Douglas DC-3 aircraft for a year, joining Australian National Airways in June 1942. The co-pilot was David Collum, aged 21. He had about 1,400 hours flying experience, mostly with Australian National Airways. The supernumerary pilot was Austin Gibson, aged 37. He had about 2,500 hours flying experience in the RAAF; half of this as a flying instructor. He had over 1,000 hours in command of twin engine aircraft but no experience on the Douglas DC-3.

¹ *Mercury Newspaper 11 March 1946*

² *Canberra Times 12 March 1946*

³ *Job, Macarthur (1992) Air crash volume2, chapter 3.*

The inquiry. The Director General of Civil Aviation, Arthur Drakeford, ordered an investigation into the accident. He selected John Watkins (Superintendent of Air Worthiness & Aeronautical Engineering) as Chairman and on 24 April 1946, appointed Mr Justice Simpson of the Supreme Court of the Australian Capital Territory to conduct the inquiry. The inquiry's findings were released on 11 June 1946.

This era of Australian aviation, with the lack of cockpit voice recorders or black boxes, made it difficult for accident investigations to ascertain a specific cause, however, the findings did present some significant factors that influenced future Australian aviation safety. The automatic pilot's control box, which had been recovered from the aircraft's wreckage, revealed the gyroscopes control nob was still set in the caged position, with the warning flag "**caged**" clearly visible. The control box also had a clearly visible placard that stated the gyro "**must be uncaged before take-off**".

The investigation proposed that the auto pilot may have been engaged at approximately 400 feet, when one of the pilots attempted to select the fuel cross-feed to ON. The controls for the cross feed and auto pilot were basically the same height, shape and only twelve inches apart. Tests that occurred appeared to support this theory, in that when the auto pilot was engaged, the control column was snatched from the pilot's hands and recovery may take some time, with a height loss of up to 600 feet.⁴

This theory was somewhat reinforced by the fact that nobody on the ground at Cambridge could remember who was seated, prior to take-off, in the co-pilot's seat and the possibility of the inexperienced supernumerary pilot being in the seat was suggested. Should the captain have called for the cross feed to be turned ON during the initial climb out (perhaps because of a fuel pressure problem on one engine), the lack of the supernumerary pilot's familiarity with the cockpit layout may have caused him to inadvertently engage the auto pilot, instead of the cross feed. But it still does not explain why the gyroscopic control nob was still caged.⁵

4. *Mercury Newspaper* 11 March 1946

5. *Canberra Times* 12 March 1946.

The inquiry further discovered some disturbing evidence in relation to the health and medical condition of the aircraft's captain, Thomas Spence. Spence was in fact a diabetic and had been treating himself with insulin. It was further discovered that he had been discharged from the RAAF in September 1941 as medically unfit. He applied for his Commercial Pilots licence in early 1942, but failed to disclose his diabetic condition during this medical and all other medical examinations.⁶

Spence was scheduled for a medical examination on 11 March for his licence renewal and it was considered plausible that he may have taken extra insulin to prepare for this examination. An overdose of insulin can distort the senses and cause muscles to be un-coordinated.

Further evidence was given to the inquiry by Michael Sharland, honorary ornithologist to the Tasmanian Museum. He told the inquiry that he had been shown the mutilated remains of a dead bird, that he identified as a Gannet. He was unable to say how the bird died, although he believed its injuries were suggestive of a collision with a fast-moving body.⁷

Captain P T L Taylor, Flight Superintendent of Australian National Airways, tendered that he thought a bird strike on the aircraft's pitot tube could have caused the crash, although Justice Simpson rejected this theory.⁸

Of the 25 persons on board the aircraft and despite an extensive search, only 21 bodies were recovered.



Wreckage of the aircraft's rudder and elevators.

Source: *Tasmanian Times*

6 *Canberra Times* 12 March 1946

7 *Job Macarthur Air crash volume 2, 1922*

8 *The Argus* 04 May 1946

The findings. During the court of inquiry, Justice Simpson became aware of four irregularities that he listed in his report:

1. When Thomas Spence had applied for a commercial pilot's licence, the RAAF Director-General of Medical Services had been acting as assessor for the Department of Civil Aviation. The Director-General had neglected to check Spence's RAAF medical history.
2. A medical examiner had failed to check Spence's statement that a recent period of hospitalisation was due to influenza, when in fact he had been suffering a serious diabetic condition.
3. Although it appeared the aircraft was about 900lbs (408kg) below the maximum authorised weight for take-off, it departed with 25 persons onboard but was approved to carry only 24 persons.
4. No flare path had been lit to illuminate the runway for take-off and any unexpected return to the aerodrome for landing.⁹

Recommendations. As a result of the inquiry, Justice Simpson made five recommendations.

1. The practice of allowing pilots under instruction to gain experience in the cockpit of aircraft carrying paying passengers should be reviewed.
2. The levers that actuate the automatic pilot and fuel cross-feed should be modified so that they have a different appearance.
3. A regulation should be made to prohibit taking off at night without a flare path or other runway lighting system and it should be compulsory for the flare path to remain lit until there is no longer a possibility that the aircraft might return to the airport for a landing.
4. Ground engineers completing daily inspections should keep copies of their inspection records.
5. Medical examinations for issue or renewal of pilot licences should be made by doctors chosen - and paid for - by the Department of Civil Aviation.¹⁰

⁹ *Mercury Newspaper 12 June 1946*

¹⁰ *The Argus 12 June 1946*



ANA DC3 Similar to the accident aircraft
Source: TAHS File photo

The Coronial Inquiry. Only 21 bodies of the 25 persons on board were found. The Tasmanian Coroner Mr Sorell, investigating the bodies, determined that the cause of their deaths were multiple fractures and injuries, but was unable to say how or in what manner they met their deaths.

Future safety. Following Justice Simpson's recommendations, three were sent to the Director General for his consideration.

1. Operation of the auto pilot off/on control on all DC3 aircraft registered in Australia should be distinctive from operation of any other control.
2. Instructions to be issued to pilots that the gyroscopes should be uncaged prior to take-off.
3. An urgent review of pilots under instruction on aircraft with fare paying passengers on board should be undertaken.¹¹

The author would like to acknowledge the kind permission of the Holyman family in allowing the writing of this article.

¹¹ *Job Macarthur, Air crash Volume 2, 1922*

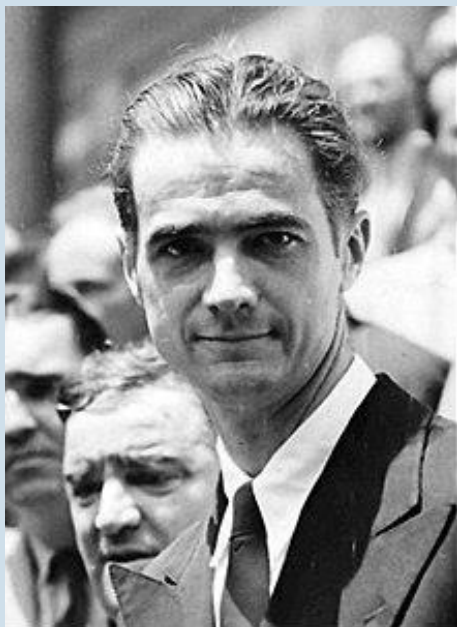
LEVIATHANS OF THE AIR PART 5

'The Spruce Goose'

W Dearing

Officially known as the *Hughes H-4 Hercules*, the *Spruce Goose* was designed and built by the Hughes Aircraft Corporation with the intention to use it as a transatlantic transport aircraft. Built from wood, due to wartime restrictions on the use of aluminium, it made only one flight on 02 November 1947.

Nicknamed *The Spruce Goose*, even though it was built from birch, the project never advanced beyond the one aircraft. Initially, a HK-1 developmental contract was released in 1942.¹ The aircraft was the brainchild of Henry Kaiser, who teamed with designer Howard Hughes, to create what would become the largest aircraft yet built. Designed to carry either 150,000lbs (68,000kgs), or two 30-ton M4 Sherman tanks, seven configurations were considered, including twin-hull and single-hull designs with combinations of four, six, and eight wing mounted engines. The final design being built mostly of wood with fabric covering the elevators and rudder.²



Howard Hughes – Rich and influential

Source: *Wikipedia.org*

Kaiser and Hughes did not enjoy a good relationship. Kaiser, continually frustrated by the slow progress and Hughes's insistence on perfection, finally withdrew from the programme. Hughes then continued the programme under the designation H-4 *Hercules* after signing a government contract that limited production to one aircraft.

During a senate hearing held on the 06 August 1947, members called for Hughes to explain the use of government funds for the aeroplane.

Hughes's obsession with the aircraft became apparent with this somewhat less than memorable comment:

*"The Hercules was a memorable undertaking. It is the largest aircraft ever built. It is over five stories tall with a wingspan larger than a football field. That's more than a city block. Now, I put the sweat of my life into that thing, I have my reputation all rolled up in it and I have stated several times that if it's a failure, I'll probably leave this country and never come back. And I mean it."*³

In today's equivalent, the aircraft's development cost exceeded \$213 million US dollars.



Hughes on the flight deck of the Spruce Goose

Source: *Pitstripes Gripes*.

The aircraft was finally transported, in three large sections and one smaller, to what was then known as Pier E Long Beach California. After reassembling the aircraft, a hangar was erected around the flying boat, with a ramp to launch the H-4 into the harbour.

1. *McDonald, John Howard Hughes and the Spruce Goose 1981.*
2. *Winchester Jim, Hughes H-4 Spruce Goose 2005.*

3. *McDonald Job, Howard Hughes and the Spruce Goose 1981.*

Returning to California on 02 November 1947, with Hughes at the controls, taxi tests began. ⁴

The crew on board consisted of Dave Grant as co-pilot, two flight engineers, 16 mechanics and two other crew. The aircraft also carried seven invited guests from the press and seven industry representatives, giving a total of thirty-six persons on board. ⁵



Taxiing out 02 November 1947.

Source: All That's Interesting.

Two taxi runs were completed and the aircraft turned for the final test run of the day. After picking up speed the Hercules lifted off the water and remained airborne for 26 seconds at a height of 70 feet and although the aircraft was still in ground effect, had proven it was flight worthy.



The Spruce Goose airborne for the first and last time.

Source: Evergreen Aviation and Space Museum

The Spruce Goose had just completed her first and final flight.

- 4.
5. *McDonald Job, Howard Hughes and the Spruce Goose 1981.*
6. *Winchester Jim, Hughes H-4 Spruce Goose 2005.*

General characteristics

- **Crew:** 3
- **Length:** 218 ft 8 in (66.65 m)
- **Wingspan:** 320 ft 11 in (97.83 m)
- **Height:** 79 ft 4 in (24.18 m)
- **Fuselage height:** 30 ft (9.1 m)
- **Empty weight:** 250,000 lbs (113,398 kg)
- **Powerplant:** 8 X Pratt & Whitney R-4360 Wasp Major 28-cylinder air-cooled radial piston engines, 3000 hp (2200 KW each).
- **Propellers:** 4-bladed Hamilton Standard, 17 ft 2 in (5.23 m) diameter constant speed propellers.
- **Cruise speed:** 250 mph (400 km/h, 220 kts)
- **Range:** 3,000 miles, (4,800 kms, 260 nmi)
- **Service ceiling:** 20,900 ft (6,400 m)



Above: The Flight Crew

Source: Evergreen Aviation.

Below: Rear facing view inside the fuselage

Source: Wickededia.org



The saga of this aircraft was not, however, over. Although the aircraft never flew again, and therefore, its lifting capacity and ceiling were

never tested, the *Spruce Goose* was to obtain notoriety of a different form.

After the one and only flight the aircraft, with a full-time crew of 300 workers all sworn to secrecy, maintained the aircraft in flying condition. Stored in a climate-controlled hangar the aircraft was constantly cared for until, in 1962, the work force was reduced to 50 workers who were finally disbanded in 1967 after Hughes's death.

Ownership of the aircraft was in constant dispute. The US government, who had contracted its construction, finally reached an agreement with the Smithsonian Institute and Summa Corporation, whereby the government would cede any rights and the aircraft would be protected from any 'commercial exploitation'.⁷ In 1980 the H-4 was acquired by the Aero Club of Southern California, who later put the aircraft on display in a very geodesic dome next to the *Queen Mary* ship exhibit in Long Beach California.



A model of the *Spruce Goose* next to a DC 3 gives a comparison and example of the aircraft's size.

Source: *Wikipedia.org*

After a long search for a suitable host, the Aero Club of Southern California arranged for the Hughes Hercules flying boat to be given to Evergreen Aviation and Space Museum in exchange for payments and a percentage of the museum's profits. The aircraft was transported by barge, train and truck to its current home in McMinnville, Oregon (about 64km southwest of Portland), where it was reassembled by Contractors Cargo Company and is currently on display. The aircraft arrived at McMinnville on 27 February 1993 after a 138-day, 1,055-mile (1,698 km) trip from Long Beach. The *Spruce Goose* geodesic site is now

⁷ *The Great Aviator Howard Hughes, his life love and films*

used by Carnival Cruise Lines as its Long Beach Terminal.⁸



One of the eight Wasp engines that powered the *Spruce Goose*

Source: *USAF Museum Daytona.*

So ended one man's dream and insatiable belief in an aeroplane that flew for 27 seconds, climbed to 70 feet, and did all of this only once.

⁸ *Winchester Jim, Hughes H-4 Spruce Goose 2005*

TAHS CHRISTMAS BBQ, HELICOPTER RESOURCES LAUNCESTON.

Friday 09 December saw TAHS members enjoy a Christmas BBQ at the Launceston headquarters of Helicopter Resources.

Base manager, Hoey Stobart, hosted the evening giving members an insight into their operations and answering questions on how these fascinating machines fly.



TAHS members and a Helicopter Resources aircraft.



Base manager Hoey Stobart explaining to TAHS member Paul Richards the finer points of the helicopter.



Above the raffle winner's aircraft having its pre-flight checks before the winner's free joy flight compliments of Helicopter Resources.



Members Lindsay Millar and Peter Manktelow enjoying the sausages.

One of the evening's highlights was a raffle with the lucky winner taking a ride compliments of Helicopter Resources.



When he is not managing our finances honorary treasurer Cranston Gilbert makes a fine chef!

A great night leading into the festive season for our members to meet and learn more about the operations surrounding the activities of Helicopter Resources. Many thanks to base manager Hoey Stobart and all at Helicopter Resources for providing their time and facilities.

"SEE YOU IN JUNE"



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TAHS has become “*sausage sizzlers*”



Thanks to the support from the following firms, we are now conducting “*sausage sizzlers*” at Bunnings Youngtown on the following dates:

Sat 22 April, Sat 27 May, and Sat 24 June with following dates to be confirmed in June’s newsletter.

Under the command of Captain Peter Manktelow this is a great new opportunity to meet our existing members and explain our club’s aims to the general public.

If you would like to assist us, Captain Peter is conducted free “*sausage sizzler*” endorsements on site and would welcome any assistance you can offer.

This is a great chance to meet and talk aeroplanes and aviation in addition to satisfying your hunger.

Any queries or offers of assistance give me a call on:

0437-202464

Wayne Dearing, Secretary.

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So now members, it’s up to you for your comments, likes or dislikes of our new format.

Any comments or suggestions contact Wayne Dearing on 0437-202464.