



# 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 14 - JUNE 2023**

**WEBSITE: [WWW.TAHS.ORG.AU](http://WWW.TAHS.ORG.AU)**

**EMAIL: [secretary@tahs.org.au](mailto:secretary@tahs.org.au)**

**TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Welcome to the fourteenth edition of our quarterly newsletter "*Roaring Forties*"

**TAHS - Office Bearers, 2023.**

<b>Patron:</b>	Robin Holyman.
<b>President:</b>	Andrew Johnson.
<b>Vice President:</b>	John Brett.
<b>Secretary:</b>	Wayne Dearing.
<b>Treasurer and Membership:</b>	Cranston Gilbert.
<b>Newsletter</b>	
<b>Co-editors:</b>	Wayne Dearing. Paul Richards.
<b>Publications Committee:</b>	Cranston Gilbert. Paul Richards. Wayne Dearing.
<b>Executive Committee</b>	
<b>Members:</b>	Peter Manktelow. Iain Pinkard. Lindsay Millar.

This edition continues Peter Manktelow's and a former colleague's absorbing careers flying helicopters, the history of two west coast airstrips and the F27 incident at Launceston Airport.

We welcome "Rosie", our newest TAHS member. "Rosie" is an Auster Autocar aircraft generously donated by Hobart owner Rob Gard. More on Rob and "Rosie" in future editions.



*File photo of "ROSIE" courtesy R Gard.*

**NEWSLETTER 14 JUNE 2023**

On ANZAC day of this year a wreath was laid, on behalf of TAHS members, on the 7 EFTS memorial at Evandale and I thought it fitting we should revisit this unit's history.

Down memory lane we rediscover the incident involving an Ansett/ANA F27 Friendship that crashed at Launceston Airport in May 1965.

Included are the dates and venues for the travelling exhibition after it leaves Flinders Island.

Paul Richards also brings us up to date on details concerning this year's "*In The Air*" seminar in September that has some surprises and is a must book date in your dairies.

Lindsay Millar provides us with a fascinating life, or is it twelve lives, of a DHC1 Chipmunk.

Finally, we conclude with our "**Stop Press**" and "**Coming Events**" page that will bring you all updates and any late news.

Remember the new email contact is now:

[secretary@tahs.org.au](mailto:secretary@tahs.org.au)

Wayne Dearing and Paul Richards  
Co- editors

**7 ELEMENTARY FLYING TRAINING SCHOOL, WESTERN JUNCTION. AUGUST 1940 – DECEMBER 1944**

During the Second World War, in particular the period of 1940 through to 1944, Australia was committed to the Empire Air Training Scheme. This was a policy designed to train Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) pilots for eventual transfer to the Royal Air Force who, in the early stages of the conflict, were unable to supply sufficient pilots. <sup>1</sup>The plan called for an establishment of a pool of recruits in the dominions from which the RAF could siphon replacement pilots. The government of Australia accepted the plan for three years and began making preparations to adopt it. Under the plan, dubbed the Empire Air Scheme in Australia, 50,000 aircrew would be trained in the dominions.

Australia planned to provide 28,000 aircrew under the scheme, accounting for 36% of the total number of proposed aircrews. Basic flying courses officially began 29 April 1940. The first Australian pilots departed for Canada on 14 November 1940, from where they would be transferred to Britain and funnelled into the RAF. The "Scheme" would ultimately cost Australia about £100,000,000 for her commitments. <sup>2</sup>

The RAAF established twelve elementary training schools during 1940 and 1941<sup>3</sup>.

7 Elementary Flying Training School was established at Western Junction Aerodrome, now the site of Launceston Airport. The aerodrome, which predated the war, was the home of the Tasmanian Aero Club. Flight training began on the

20th August 1940. As such the Aero Club was forced to relocate their operations to Cambridge Airport, Hobart. <sup>4</sup>

No. 7 EFTS was the only RAAF training unit to be located in Tasmania during the war. <sup>5</sup>

On the 22nd August 1940, an advance party of 21 NCO's and other ranks, under the command of Pilot Officer Hall, sailed for Launceston. Two days later Flight Lt Buscombe, 7 EFTS initial commanding officer and the unit's CFI Flight Lt Townsend, sailed. The schools initial complement of 60 NCO's and other ranks arrived during August 1940 having to be billeted whilst construction of the facility was completed. A further satellite airstrip was constructed at Nile approximately 8 miles south of Western Junction. Nile was used for training purposes and as an alternate should weather preclude landing at Western Junction. <sup>6</sup>



*Aerial file photo of the initial 7 EFTS facilities.*

On the 11th August 1940 eleven Tiger Moth training aircraft arrived from Laverton via Yanakie and Whitemark eleven further arriving on 16<sup>th</sup> August.

<sup>1</sup> Aust War Memorial Retrieved 16 Feb 2017

<sup>2</sup> Oxford Companion of Aust Military History

<sup>3</sup> RAAF Museum 2012.

<sup>4</sup> RAAF historical Section 1995.

<sup>5</sup> Western Junction RAAF Museum retrieved 01 June 2012.

<sup>6</sup> RAAF Historical Section, 1995.

Initially operating as a half-strength elementary flying training school, the unit comprised two flights of Tiger Moths with several others held in reserve.

By the 28th August the 7 EFTS boasted 22 Tiger Moths with an aircraft serviceability of 96%.

The Tiger Moth was the RAAF's primary training aircraft. A single engine, two seat biplane with a 130hp de Havilland Gypsy Major I engine, a max speed of 109 kts, a cruising speed of 90kts, a service ceiling of 13,000 feet and a range of 300 miles.



*Another training flight commences.*

*Photo courtesy of the Schoon Collection*

The role of these units was to provide a twelve-week long introductory flying training course. The flying training was undertaken in two stages; the first involved four weeks of instruction, including ten hours of flying, which were used to determine trainees' suitability to become pilots. Those that passed this grading process then received a further eight weeks of training (including 65 hours of flying) at the elementary training school.

Pilots who successfully completed this course were posted to a service flying training school in either Australia or Canada for the next stage of their instruction as military aviators.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Stephens 2006.

Throughout the 7 EFTS period of operations, accidents occurred, some as minor as a collision whilst taxiing, through to forced landings because of engine failure.

Tragically ten personnel lost their lives as a result of training accidents and illness during the operational period of 7 EFTS.<sup>8</sup>

Six personnel were killed in mid-air collisions, two died following their aircraft crashing near Longford whilst on a training flight, one enlisted man died as the result of a ground accident and one Flight Sgt died due to illness.

While 7 EFTS was the only flying unit stationed at Western Junction, the aerodrome was often visited by Airspeed Oxfords piloted by aircrew undergoing training at the Bairnsdale based No. 1 Operational Training Unit. Additionally, No. 67 Squadron aircraft also passed through the aerodrome during anti-submarine patrols of the Bass Strait area; this unit was headquartered at Laverton in Victoria.

By the end of October 1944, the 7 EFTS was equipped with 60 Tiger Moth aircraft and had trained 1,801 pilots. Training was suspended in December 1944, and all flying ceased on 28 March the next year. The school was disbanded on 31 August 1945. Many of the Tiger Moths previously used by 7 EFTS were sold after the war and three hangars constructed for the RAAF at Western Junction were donated to the Tasmanian Aero Club.

As a tribute, the Evandale History Society, in conjunction with the RAAF Association, decided to build a memorial dedicated to the men who trained and served at Western Junction. The memorial also commemorates the ten servicemen who died whilst based there and also honours the approximately one third of the 1,801 pilots who trained there and died

<sup>8</sup> Evandale History Society.

while training in other bases or whilst on active duty.<sup>9</sup>

The memorial was appropriately located in the historic village of Evandale, close to Western Junction and the village where so many members of the initial intake were billeted.



*File photo of pilots and aircraft of 7 EFTS.*

On Saturday 21st August, 2010 guests arrived for the formal unveiling of the memorial by Group Captain Glen Coy CSC.

Among the guests were 20 original veterans of No 7 EFTS



*Above Tiger Moth of 7 EFTS and below the unit's memorial at Evandale village.*

*Photos courtesy of Evandale History Society*



*First three Tiger Moths to arrive at 7 EFTS Photo courtesy of Aust War Memorial.*



---

<sup>9</sup> Evandale History Society.

## ***ANSETT-ANA F27 INCIDENT***

### ***LAUNCESTON AIRPORT***

***17 MARCH 1965***



*File photo F27 Fokker Friendship 200 VH-FNH*

On 17 March 1965 the Ansett-ANA F27 Friendship, registered VH-FNH, departed Flinders Island for the 94-mile flight to Launceston Airport. On board was the Captain, Joseph Waxnian of Melbourne, First Officer E York of Melbourne, hostess Miss Raclene Hoffmann of Adelaide and nineteen passengers.

To avoid forecast turbulence over Mount Barrow and Mount Arthur, the aircraft remained at its cruising level until clear of the mountains before commencing the descent.

While the aircraft was descending in the Launceston circuit area, the crew experienced trouble with the pitch-lock mechanism on number 1 propeller and subsequently feathered the engine. Because of the late departure from the aircraft's cruising level the aircraft had achieved a high rate of descent, with 40 degrees of flap set but no increase in power of the remaining engine.

As the aircraft began to turn onto its final approach, the high rate of descent was arrested and when established on its final approach, the aircraft was slightly lower than would be expected.

Power was added to the remaining engine in an attempt to control the aircraft's approach profile and control the rate of descent. When the crew were unable to stabilise the aircraft's approach, a missed approach and overshoot was attempted, however, by this time the aircraft had dropped below the minimum control speed.

When full power was applied to the number 2 engine the left wing dropped, probably because by now the aircraft was behind the drag curve. As a result, the wing struck the ground and the aircraft spun around through 180 degrees. Fuel tanks were ruptured and the friction of the aircraft resulted in the aircraft catching fire that was quickly extinguished by the airport's emergency service.





*Series of photos depicting the damaged aircraft courtesy of Bureau of Aircraft Accidents Archives collection.*

Incredibly all 23 persons on board escaped, some with minor injuries while exiting the aircraft through the main door and emergency exit.

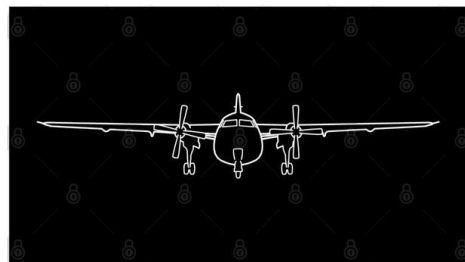
Captain Waxnian was admitted to the Launceston General Hospital suffering with shock and facial lacerations. Several passengers, First Officer York and hostess Hoffman received medical attention but did not require hospitalisation.

The Minister of Civil Aviation, Senator Henty, immediately announced a full inquiry led by the director of accident investigations, Mr Frank Yeend. Whether it was the sturdy construction of the aircraft, or the quick professional actions taken by the emergency service personnel that saved all on board, is the subject of conjecture. What is apparent from the preceding photos is the tremendous damage sustained by the aircraft.

Half the port wing was torn away, the fuselage was crumpled and both propellers were badly twisted. This together with the fire and foam damage was indicative of the impact forces sustained by the aircraft and the incredibly good fortune of all persons on board.

The damage sustained by the aircraft resulted in it being written-off and, rumour has it, the remains of the F27 were deposited on the Evandale tip. So ended the saga of Launceston's first commercial aircraft crash.

Some-time after this incident, all F27 aircraft single-engine approaches were flown with approach flap only set at 26.5 degrees, not the 40 degree setting as was the case in this incident.



## **HELICOPTERS IN TASMANIA Part 3**

**Peter Manktelow**

The last newsletter (#13) we left off about halfway through Hookway Aviation's client list. Before I take up on that let me give you my usual Helicopter Aerodynamics brief. Do I hear groans from some of our readers? It must be done so that you, dear reader, understand that these strange machines called helicopters are not kept airborne by magic or smoke and mirrors but fly by the same laws as our fixed wing brothers.

### **Retreating Blade Stall.**

A fixed wing aeroplane will experience aerodynamic stalling of the wing at a given angle of attack but it is easier to think in terms of the airspeed at which the stall occurs. An aerodynamic stall of the wing means that instead of a smooth airflow over the wing, it becomes turbulent and lift, that which keeps the aircraft airborne, is lost. The nose will drop. A wing may also drop and the aircraft will lose altitude. (It may even go into what our early aviators called the death spiral. We now call that a spin.) Stalling speed will vary from aeroplane to aeroplane and it is also a condition of the environment. The stall speed of a typical light aircraft will be somewhere below, say, 40 knots whereas a jet is around 80 to 100 knots.

Does a helicopter stall? Not in the sense of a fixed wing stall, but by what is referred to as Retreating Blade stall. The earliest equation we learnt as "sprog" pilots was that LIFT equals  $\frac{1}{2} \rho V^2 S$ . Forget about everything in that formula except the "V" which is the speed of the aircraft. If that speed is zero then there will be no lift. The weight of the aircraft and gravity take over and the aircraft does not fly but falls.

Now back to our helicopter or rather the main rotor blade which is an aerofoil which produces lift by virtue of the same LIFT FORMULA, but particularly speed ("V") of rotation of the blades.

Stand to attention and spread your arms out 90 degrees from your body. You are now a two bladed helicopter and your arms represent the two main rotor blades and your nose represents the direction of flight. You are also an American helicopter because the direction of rotation of your "blades" will be anti-clockwise if viewed from above or the right blade (your right arm) will be moving forward and the left blade (arm) will be moving backwards. Russian and French helicopter main rotor blades rotate clockwise. Don't ask me why, particularly when you realize that Igor Sikorsky, a Russian émigré to the USA. is considered the father of helicopters. Anyhow our main rotor blades are rotating and our forward speed through the air is 1 Apple. We pick a spot on this forward moving blade and find that the speed of rotation at that point is also 1 Apple. That makes the speed of the air over that advancing blade 2 Apples. Great. tons of lift being generated. Now let us look at our retreating blade. The forward speed of our helicopter is still 1 Apple but we have the retreating blade rotating backwards at 1 Apple so that the total speed of the air over that retreating blade is ZERO. ZERO for V in our lift equation means ZERO LIFT.....YIKES! Big Trouble. Massive vibration, nose pitches up and aircraft rolls left uncontrollably. Now this will occur a good margin beyond our Vne (FLIGHT MANUAL MANDATED NEVER EXCEED SPEED) We have just experienced RETREATING BLADE STALL. Again, I must apologise to those Professors of Aerodynamics but I am a great believer in the simplistic approach as per my explanation above.



## Department of Transport (Lighthouse Division)

We had a contract with the lighthouse service for a fortnightly supply, and personnel run down to Maatsuyker Island plus about every three months a “round robin” trip stopping at every lighthouse in Tassie. By that time, most of the lighthouses were de-manned and automatic. Their power derived from batteries but later on by solar power. Tasman Island had been de-manned just as I arrived in Tassie. Tasman Island could be a bummer of a helipad to approach and land on. I nearly came to grief on one approach I made there but that is for later. Looking at my log book, I did my first Lighthouse run in October 1977 with a number of shuttles to/from Tasman Island (final stages of automating) and then down to Maatsuyker. The circumnavigation flights around Tasmania were great. A fantastic way to see the entire coast of Tasmania. I had one particular stop at a place called Cat Island, east of Flinders Island. No bloody cats but the cement helipad was covered in snakes sunning themselves. And as we all know, in Tasmania, ALL snakes are poisonous. I hovered over the pad which cleared these rascally reptiles for my landing but I told the lighthouse engineers that I was not getting out of the aircraft after we shut-down!

Tasman Island is like a great big cylinder of rock (1,000 feet high) sticking out of the ocean. On my approach to the helipad on this fateful occasion, I had assessed the wind as a westerly but well over the 10 knots that produces white caps (and directional streaks) on the water below. So normally the approach would be on a westerly heading. This would be the wind direction, an incorrect assumption, all the way down to the ground.



*Tasman Island: Photos courtesy PManktelow collection*

Not so. I had not taken in to account the finer points of my mountain flying course with the RAAF. The wind blew westerly at the base of the island, then blew straight vertically up the sheer cliff, then rolled over on to the top of the island and in so doing reversed itself in the last couple of hundred feet to the pad. I was on a downwind approach!!!! The aircraft was at full power and still descending at a fierce rate of descent...uncontrollably.

This was looking like it was going to be a sort of controlled crash as I was committed to land once I got caught in the now easterly wind with a hefty down draft/turbulence, just to make things even more uncomfortable.

Well, the aircraft arrived over the pad and to my good luck, the wind was pretty dead below about 50 feet and with full power it came to a bouncy hover. Glad I did not have any passengers on board as I had just about wet my pants. Lesson learnt!

Maatsuyker's old helipad could also scare the hell out of you but they eventually changed location which made all the difference. By that time, I had completed a mountain flying course in Penticton, Canada and their approaches, while somewhat radical, were far superior to what I had learned from the RAAF course.

The Bell 206 that we operated to Maatsuyker was fitted with floats as we were required to have them if we could not fly over water within autorotation (engine off forced landing) distance of land, which was definitely the case on the run down to Maatsuyker. These floats were big, black, partly aerodynamic shaped bags permanently inflated with air. On the ground they made the aircraft slop around and airborne were no better, particularly if a slow leak had one bag not fully inflated. The aircraft flew like a big bag of excreta.

*Three photos Bell 206 floats courtesy of Okanagan Re-union collection.*



For all the downsides of the lighthouse work it was for the most part, great flying. Low Rocky Point on the west coast was always a favourite light to shut down on as it was impossible to get to it by boat or overland and so the crayfish had never seen man since Adam was a kid and were abundant. We always carried a cray ring to LRP.



*Photos courtesy PManktelow collection*

We did a fair amount of flying for mineral exploration companies, mainly on the west coast. The Mount Lyell Mining and Railway Company (as it was still quaintly called at the time) had us flying to the south of Queenstown. Mount Dukes and Mount

Darwin comes to mind. Rough, rugged but beautiful country. Henty River gold was just in the exploration phase.

### **Something a bit different**

The Sydney Morning Herald wanted a TV advertisement done. With two helicopters (Bell 206) we flew down to Bruny Island and from there to the shoot location.....Pedra Branca! Pedra Branca is a rocky outcrop poking up out of the water some 200 feet above sea level and about 15 miles south of the Bruny Island lighthouse. On a good visibility day, you can just make out the white smudge of the rock whilst standing at the base of the lighthouse. The white is eons of accumulated bird droppings. One aircraft was the photographic aircraft. The other aircraft placed a Jason Recliner Rocker arm chair on the top of the rock and then an actor who sat "comfortably" in the arm chair reading an opened copy of the Sydney Morning Herald with the sun just poking above the eastern horizon. I wonder if that arm chair is still down there?

### **Diamonds are forever**

Three Jetrangers and winter in Tassie meant very little flying, but Vowell Helicopters (later to become Helicopter Resources) had a contract with a small company called Ashton Mining for two Jetrangers, looking for diamonds in Western Australia. Their misfortune was our gain. Over a single day both of their aircraft were put out of action. There were few helicopters in Australia at that time. Hookway stepped in and myself and John Wilson, our Chief Engineer, ferried VH AJD (Bell 206 Jetranger) to the west for the start of a long relationship with Ashton, later to become CRA. And we all know about the Argyle diamond mine. The flying was fantastic and to be on site when they made the find of the century was amazing. Pink diamonds!

### **HEC**

Peter (Hookway ) was the first operator to bring the AS350 Squirell helicopter in to Australia. I barely fit in to a Bell 206 Jetranger being 6 foot tall, but the Ecuriel (French for Squirell) was roomy, had tons of power and had a heater as standard equipment as well as 6 seats compared to the B206's 5. It was a lovely machine to fly and still is if you talk to our local pilots.



*Squirell AS350 D Model*

So, Peter was in a mad rush this day to catch his flight to MEL then to Paris to finalize the deal; the purchase of 3 AS350 for our little operation now at Cambridge Airport. He had employed Helga who had a degree in business management. As he walked out the door, he gave Helga and I the previous year's unsuccessful bid for the Hydro contract plus the blank document for this year's bid. We had no other access to information such as costings etc.

The plum contract in Tasmania. That which we had sought for years. But always won by a mainland operator. His parting remarks were, "see what you can do with this!"

Now the State Government in its wisdom had a permanent offer on the table that whosoever established a helicopter based **permanently** in Tasmania all year round would receive a discount on any government bids. I can't remember exactly what it was. I think it was something in the

region of 10%. So, if we bid a contract for payment of say 100 oranges and a mainland operator also bid but for 90 oranges then we got the contract. I would like to say that when Helga and I put our heads together we came up with a cunning scheme in order to win the contract. In actual fact we just bid the contract on last year's figures plus 5%. Well, we did not have the information to come up with anything more sophisticated.

“WE WON THE CONTRACT!”

Peter returned from Paris but instead of being jubilant about winning the contract he expressed he was disappointed that we had gone in too low. He set up a meeting with the Hydro, moir and himself where he made the statement that he could not carry out the contract at the price Helga and I had submitted. Much to my surprise, instead of being kicked out of the Hydro office, Hydro asked Peter how much of an increase would allow us to still do the job. Peter replied that an increase of \$4 per flight hour would do the trick which Hydro accepted. **FOUR DOLLARS AN HOUR INCREASE!!!!** That was why Peter was a millionaire and I was but a poorly paid, humble pilot!

We started flying for the HEC at Strathgordon and Tullah and continued to hold the contract right up to and including 1983 when the Franklin Dam dispute shut down Hydro's large-scale use of helicopters.

### **The next adventure**

It was time for me to move on. I was successful in my application to a company called Okanagan Helicopters Australia Ltd. This was a joint venture between Brambles (Australia) and Okanagan Helicopters Ltd (Vancouver, Canada). I was to fly the Sikorsky S61N twin-engine, 24 passenger, 20,500 lb helicopter out of

Exmouth in Western Australia offshore to a drill ship. This was the same helicopter type that Ansett had been operating out of Proserpine. My relationship with Hookway took another twist and turn some years later.....but that is for another day.

.....  
***Whilst on the subject of helicopter pilots, the following article and photos of him was received from Hobart member Ricardo Piacenza and is a great read!***

.....  
***RICARDO PIACENZA – 53 Years in Australia.***

**1<sup>st</sup> May 2023, 53 YEARS!!**

Very much at the same time that I am writing these lines, 53 years ago an ALITALIA DC8 was landing at Kingsford Smith Airport's RWY 34 with a Uruguayan family of three.

10 years of working in different things and studying at home, allowed the dream to become a Commercial Pilot a reality. As the saying goes: “and the rest is History” ...

Working all over Australia, first in the cattle mustering industry, later in mining exploration, Surf Search & Rescue and other flying duties, one day I ended up in Tasmania. This opened another big chapter in my working life: a few tours to Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and... more than 22 trips to Antarctica and some of the islands in the Southern Ocean. This not only gave me the privilege to fly in incredibly beautiful places, but to meet a lot of people, some of whom became great friends and I still keep in contact regularly.



*Farewell from my parents*



The Departure (never mind what I have in my left hand AND WE ARE ON THE TARMAC!)

I wish I had never smoked!



The first job: working for QANTAS as a baggage handler. In the photo next to Pan Am's B747, the first Jumbo that came to Australia



With time "work" improved (it took about 10 years...)



In "The Office"

**THANK YOU, AUSTRALIA FOR THESE MAGNIFICENT 53 YEARS!!**

After some prompting from "Captain Sizzle" AKA Peter Mantkelow Ricardo

expanded on his career for “Roaring Forties”

Ricardo commenced flying with Hookway Aviation at Tullah on 01<sup>st</sup> October 1984, retiring from Helicopter Resources in 2011 with 10,700 accident-free hours in his logbook. With a career containing more than ten endorsements, Ricardo’s early Australian employment included cattle mustering in Northern Queensland and the Northern Territory, mining exploration, surf rescue service, the mandatory bank runs, photography, sling work and charters.

Following all of this Tasmania beckoned and Ricardo found himself in the “apple isle” on a one-month contract to fly a Jet Ranger on Tasmania’s West Coast.

Following Tassie’s rugged West Coast Antarctica beckoned Ricardo and 1997 he set off on his first trip south in November of that year on the ship appropriately named MV Iceberg.

One of Ricardo’s fondest memories was the day he landed the first helicopter on the “Aroua Australis” following its initial arrival at Hobart’s Princess Wharf.

As if cattle mustering, the Tasmanian West Coast and Antarctica wasn’t enough excitement, Ricardo recalls these incidents that in his own words, “*were very valuable experiences in my flying career.*”

1) When flying with a sling load of "human manure" from Kia-Ora hut to Derwent Bridge, I hit a wedge-tail eagle at 4000' over Lk St Clair. It stained the windscreen a little with blood, but the impact had been somewhere else (I thought in the mast). I radioed the incident to the ranger that was waiting for me, continued flying normally and landed without problem. On inspection I could see that one of the blades also had some blood stains but didn't look damaged. Back at

CBG (Cambridge), the engineers found that it had started to delaminate...

2) When looking for a missing child over the Carlton River just after first light with the SAR helicopter, we were going "low and slow" (50kts and 50 feet) and caught the power lines that went across to Primrose Sands. A kid had left his grandparents' home at Dodges Ferry the night before, and didn't return. We were very lucky: the wire broke and we landed on a sand bank. I thought we had hit it with the mast, returned to CBG and later the engineers (as in the previous incident) found that one of the blades had started to delaminate. I was also told by HEC people that the wire was aluminium and that's why it gave, had it been steel I wouldn't be able to tell the storey.

Later they found the little brat across the water at the end point of Seven Mile Beach, sound asleep on a boat he had stolen.

3) Late on a winter day with some broken holes in the clouds, we were asked by TasTV if it was possible to fly a technician to the top of Mt Wellington as the transmitter was out and the road was closed because of the snow. We flew up there, got in through a "clear hole" and shut down. While waiting for the technician to finish his job, the clouds were coming and going, with some clear patches, but not many. When he returned, I started up SES and after a few minutes there was a very strong vibration through the whole aircraft. I shut down immediately and found that ice had formed on the leading edges of the tail rotor and also on the main blades. Had I tried to get out through one of the "now and then holes in the clouds" we would have not made it. With the weather as it was and being late in the day, there was no chance of flying back. Fortunately, the ABC has some permanent staff there and a building with emergency accommodation and food. We stayed overnight and the following morning took the photo attached... We had

to walk 2 km through the snow to get picked up by a 4WD and go back to CBG.



*Ice, Mount Wellington and SES (All Photos courtesy Ricardo Piacenza collection)*

A couple of days later the weather improved, another pilot and some engineers de-iced SES and flew it back.

4) When doing the "Maatsuyker run" one day, and just before getting to RBY (Bruny Island) from CBG, I had a hydraulic failure and had to do for real what we regularly practiced every 6 months on the "Base Check ". I had no problem controlling the aircraft and didn't need to do a running landing (on reflection I should have!). When I checked the aircraft, I found the hydraulic belt had broken.

Just another day at the office of a wonderful career as a helicopter pilot.

**LINDSAY MILLAR, OAM,**

**TAHS HISTORIAN**

The following article is a fascinating tale of the life of one aeroplane supplied by Lindsay Millar. Lindsay is the TAHS historian who has a wealth of historical knowledge relating to Tasmania's aviation history but sometimes forgets to mention the role he played in our state's aviation history. The editors, unbeknown to Lindsay, decided a small tribute was applicable not only for his historical knowledge but his aviation experience.

Lindsay joined the Tasmanian Aero Club in 1956 and his first solo was in an Auster J2 Arrow. He completed his private pilot's licence in a DH-82 Tiger Moth and his third endorsement was on a Chipmunk registered VH-BSQ. All three aircraft are incredibly still flying.



*A very young and smiling Lindsay Millar in the cockpit of VH-BSQ around 1962. That's right our Lindsay! Photo courtesy LMillar collection.*

Lindsay's final endorsement was on an ex-RAF Jet Provost T-4. An incredible flying career that spanned piston engine aircraft to high performance jets.

## ***THE TWELVE LIVES OF A “CHIPMUNK”***

***Lindsay Millar OAM***

Folklore often states that a cat has nine lives. The Chipmunk, or “Chippy”, in our story has in fact, at the ripe old age of 72 years old, lived through twelve lives and is still counting. You may well ask how could this be but this is no four-legged tree climbing chipmunk. This story is about a remarkable aircraft: The de-Havilland DHC-1 Chipmunk Light Aircraft. Many would remember her by the Tas Aero Club aircraft registration VH-BSQ.



*Chipmunk in the role as a RAF training aircraft  
courtesy L Millar collection.*

The history of the Chipmunk dates back to 1946. Designed in Canada as a replacement for the aging DH-82 Tiger Moth, over 1200 were built in Canada and the UK and were used as military trainers in over 24 countries. A two-seater canopied tail wheel aircraft, powered by a 145hp Gypsy Major engine, the aircraft was fully aerobatic and cruised at 95 knots.

***Life number 1:*** Our aircraft was built in the UK in 1951 with the serial number WG-427 and served with the RAF basic trainer until 1956.

***Life number 2:*** Our “Chippy” was one of 80 purchased by the Royal Federation of Aero Clubs of Australia in 1957 to be made available for clubs to buy as replacements for the widely used but aging DH-82 Tiger Moths. WG-427 was one of five allocated to the Tasmanian Aero Club and was duly registered as VH-BSQ with the other four Chipmunks being registered as BSP, BSR, BSJ and BSS.

Regarded as one of the finest handling light aircraft ever built, the “Chippy” proved to be a major improvement, as a training aircraft, for both instructors and students. Able to handle stronger winds the aircraft were fitted with radios, a first for the aero club’s aircraft.

On arrival the aircraft were stripped of their RAF colours, the skin polished and rudders painted with red, blue and yellow stripes. The starter cartridge was removed for safety and cost reasons. Even the pine crates the aircraft arrived in found a home at Bridport Aerodrome as a club hut built by members for use as a holiday camp.



*“Quebec” in her Tas Aero Club days. Photo courtesy  
L Millar collection.*

The Chipmunks were used by the aero club for six to seven years before a decision was made to sell them. More versatile two and four seat Cessna and Piper aircraft provided more versatility.



**Life number 3 for “Quebec”** In 1964 our aircraft was sold to “Sasin” aircraft services, re-registered VH-GEB and converted to a Sasin S-29 crop-sprayer operating in South Australia. The front cockpit was removed and converted to a single bubble canopy over the rear cockpit.



*“Quebec” in her Sasin croppie days. Photo courtesy of L Millar collection.*

**Life number 4** began after VH-GEB was sold to the Royal South Australian Aero Club. The sale was following the aircraft being damaged in 1966. Following repairs to the aircraft she was again sold in 1969.

**Life number 5** saw our “Chippie” sold to the Adelaide Soaring Club as a glider tug. However, fate was not done with “Quebec” who was again sold, following damage sustained whilst operating as a tug, that required a wing replacement.

**Life number 6** and “Uncle Sam” of the USA came to her rescue. In 1971 an American air-show pilot came to Australia planning to buy three Chipmunks and take them back home for modification to “Super Chipmunks”. Once modified the aircraft were to be used on the booming American air-show circuit. Modifications included the removal of the Gypsy Major engine and replacing it with a 260hp Lycoming.

Other modifications included the shortening of the wings, lengthening of the ailerons and the fitting of a larger rudder. So once modified VH-BQR became

N7DW, a registration she still bears to this day.

**Life number 7** saw our “Chippie” becoming a film star. In 1972-73 Universal Films were making a movie about barnstorming flyers in America during the late 1920’s starring Robert Redford as the great Waldo Pepper. She appeared on the silver screen as the fictional “Styles Skystreak”, made up with an open cockpit, spoked wheels and wire strutting. Not simply wanting to be a film star our “Chippie”, during the filming, became the first aircraft in the world to fly an outside loop.

**Life number 8** now became a converted “Super Chipmunk” and began a long career as a live air-show performer. From 1974 until 2000 our “Chippie” performed throughout the USA, flown in many colour schemes and by many pilots entertaining millions of air-show patrons.

**Life number 9** saw our aircraft pass through the hands of many owners being used for general flying and photographic flights before again being placed on the market.



*As N7DW in our “Chippies” air-show days. Photo courtesy of M Meredith collection.*

**Life number 10** saw a retired Naval Navigator/Bombardier, Captain Mark Merideth appear. In 2009 he purchased our “Chippie”, who was now in poor condition, as a retirement project. Having

learnt to fly, after leaving the navy, and obtaining a tail wheel endorsement Mark began an extensive and meticulous restoration programme. Included was a major overhaul of the 300hp IO-540 Lycoming engine, a fresh blue and white colour scheme and two open cockpits with roll over protection. A further innovation was the aircraft now being flown from the rear cockpit with a cover that can be screwed in place over the front cockpit.

A further challenge for Mark was the fuel consumption. With only 9 gallons of fuel in each wing and a 300hp engine, “Quebec” required a drink every one hour of flying making cross country flying a planning challenge. The solution was the construction of a 15 Gallon auxiliary tank that could be fitted, when needed, in the front cockpit.

As a final touch to the paint scheme and no doubt to link our “Chippy” with his time in the navy flying in the A-6 Intruders, Mark modified her tail insignia. He replaced the squadrons “leaping panther” insignia with that of a “leaping chipmunk” on her rudder. Restoration completed and Chipmunk N7DW once again took to the air.

**Life number 11** saw “Quebec” fly in 2014 to “Oshkosh”, one of the largest airshows in the world where she won the outstanding classic aircraft award. On a return visit the following year she won the prestigious “The Spirit of America, Charles Lindbergh, Custom Classic Champion” award. In 2016 Mark and “Quebec” were invited back to Oshkosh to fly in a twenty strong Chipmunk and Super Chipmunk formation celebrating the anniversary of the first flight of the De-Havilland Canada DHC-1 in 1946.

From training novice pilots in England and Tasmania, to the days of her crop-dusting life, towing gliders, a movie star and two

restorations “Quebec” was back as a star exhibit returning on many occasions to the Oshkosh air pageant.

**Life number 12** began when our aircraft was a mature 70 something year old lady. Following Oshkosh, Mark had obtained sponsorship from Lycoming and Electroair for the supply of a competition class engine that resulted in Mark and “Quebec” commencing a training course for aerobatic competitions. After achieving success in this category Mark installed our aircraft with smoke. Working up a slow ten-minute low “G” vintage aircraft display he gained certification to perform at airshows. Thanks to the new engine our “Chippy” began flying at local air-shows. Now established as an air-show performer Mark fitted wing tip smoke to improve the visual impact of the routine.



*Our “Chippie” strutting her stuff!*

*Photo courtesy of Mark Merideth collection.*

The arrival of the Covid Pandemic did not deter Mark and “Quebec” as they became involved in virtual air-shows.

With other participants, they recorded their routines that was linked to a commentary and broadcast as though it was an actual event. No Covid was going to stop our “Chippie”.

Mark and “Quebec” are now invited to perform as a feature listed event in many long standing local area air-shows.

Mark is currently working on a bubble canopy for the rear cockpit. Just a little more comfort for those cross-country Flights.



*A man and his “Chippie” Mark and “Quebec” <sup>(1)</sup>*

A further recognition of his workmanship and dedication in restoring our “Chippie” was recorded in 2022. The UK magazine, Aeroplane, in a 2022 feature on Chipmunks rated “Quebec” as the ultimate Chipmunk conversion.

**Life number 13** hasn’t quite commenced yet but with Mark’s dedication I am sure life number 13 will continue the remarkable story of this aircraft.

***Photos of Mark and the “Chippie” showing off their reward***



***Above the finished product following her restoration and below the Potomac award.***



***All photos courtesy of Mark Meredith collection.***



**TASMANIAN AVIATION  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
“IN THE AIR” AVIATION  
SEMINAR 08 SEPTEMBER.**

The aviation seminar planned for 08 September 2023 will be an all-day seminar culminating with an evening Soiree.



Launceston Church  
Grammar School  
*Nurture, Challenge, Inspire*

The venue is the Mowbray Campus of the Launceston Church Grammar School who are again hosting the event.

Following the keynote speaker Jon Addison, who will deliver a presentation on Herbert King’s Aerial Survey of Launceston, there will be a mentored vocational session on the aviation industry presented by six mentors represented by pilots, pilot instructors and a paramedic delivered to the Grade 10 students of Grammar and Scotch Oakburn College.



Hoey Stobart will be flying in and landing on the main oval at 1pm especially for the Grammar Junior school students who are being bused over from the Prep School in Lyttleton Street.



We are also pleased to welcome members of Phoenix Flyers of Launceston Inc with their

model planes which will be on display during our morning, lunch and afternoon tea breaks.

I am also pleased to announce that we will also have representation from the Australian Military Defence Recruiting Force from Hobart in attendance for the students.

**DEFENCE FORCE RECRUITING**

**Melissa Maher:** Chief Petty Officer – Royal Australian Navy, Careers Promotion Team Leader

Our speakers are well versed in their own professions and have a major focus in their talks on personalities of aviation or a story to tell from an historic perspective.

**Our mentors are:**

Geogia Rundel- TriStar Airlines, pilot  
instructor Adrienne Fleming- TriStar Founder  
Tony Powell – Bell Helicopters  
Charles Wendell-Smith- Paramedic  
Andrew Ford-Commercial Airline Pilot  
Guy Standen- Commercial Airline Pilot

who will be introduced by LCGS Careers Officer- Fiona Symons and Defence Force Recruitment Petty Officer Melissa Maher RAN.

**Our Guest Speakers are:**

Jon Addison- Keynote Speaker

Paul A.C. Richards AM  
Capt Robert Cassidy  
Peter Anderson  
John Livermore  
Lindsay Millar OAM  
David Saunders ‘Soiree Speaker’



*Photo courtesy of QANTAS collection.*

The Seminar soirée which is from 6.00 pm to 8.00 pm will be held in the LCGS Hub or Café 1846.

**A Spring soirée with seafood, sushi, Tasmanian wine, and a string quartet. All set for a fabulous occasion.**

**Speaker: David Saunders,** Past Manager of the Tullamarine Flight Simulator and Ansett Commercial airline pilot until medically grounded.

**Topic:** “Have flying careers really changed dramatically? The Golden Years of Domestic airline flying in the 1960s and 1970s.”

#### **A visit to the School’s Aviation Centre**

As part of the 175-year celebrations in 2021 a new Aviation Centre was opened at the Schools Senior Campus.

With notable alumni including Sir Wilmot Hudson Fysh (co-founder of Qantas), David Warren (creator of the black box flight recorder) and Victor and Ivan Holyman (co-founders of Holyman’s Airlines, later to become part of Australian National Airlines and Ansett-ANA), aviation is very much a part of the school’s heritage, and now its future.

The purpose-built fit-out will be the epicenter for students enrolled in the school’s unique Aviation programme – the only one of its kind in the state.

The Aviation Centre is an inspiring space for students to undertake hands-on aeronautical engineering best practice and flight theory.



#### **Launceston Church Grammar School Sinclair Thyne Auditorium**

This is the second Aviation Seminar presented by the TAHS, building on the first held last year. This year we have a full day planned.

The Seminar assembles a number of speakers and researchers from Tasmania and mainland Australia who will talk about the history of aviation and their personal experiences over the years.

Our host, The Launceston Church Grammar School has a major association with the development of Aviation not only in Tasmania but also Australia. This year there is a vocational focus on aviation and past students of the School in aviation careers will be mentoring present students on what opportunities there are out there in the world of Aviation.

I hope you will enjoy these presentations and the Seminar *Soirée* on Saturday evening.

Please put this date in your diary “IN THE AIR” Aviation Seminar-8 September 2023.

The cost for the full day is \$75 and includes Morning Tea, Lunch, Afternoon Tea and Soiree nibbles.

**Paul A.C. Richards AM  
Convenor**

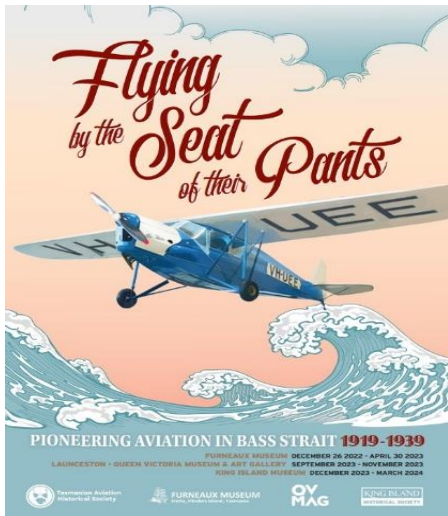
#### TASMANIAN AVIATION PIONEERS



**“SEE OUR SEMINAR INVITATION  
AFTER STOP PRESS PAGE”**



## COMING EVENTS



Our travelling exhibition “Flying by the Seat of their Pants”, touches down in Launceston on the 01<sup>st</sup> September at the QV Museum and Art Gallery, Inveresk.



*Photo courtesy QV Museum and Art Gallery Inveresk*

After a successful opening and season on Flinders Island the exhibition opens in Launceston for an extended stay.



**Photos depicting the display and memorabilia**

Based on a time line 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.

*Exhibition photos courtesy of TAHS collection.*



The display encompasses the history of commercial flights to the islands and across Bass Strait from 1919 until 1939.

A must see for all aviation enthusiasts!



## **STOP PRESS!**



More news below on our “Sausage Sizzle” dates. We will be “sizzling” in June, July, August, and September at Bunnings Kings Meadows on the following dates:

Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> June

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> July

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> August

Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September

Come along and taste our goodies and talk aeroplanes. Great way to meet members, greet new members and get out of mowing the lawns.

### **MEMBERS GENERAL MEETINGS**



The next general meeting will be held on Tuesday 11 July at the RSL Building, Wellington Street, Launceston from 5:30pm.

Nibblys, drinks and a guest speaker will follow the normal monthly meeting.

This is a great way to meet fellow members and learn more of aviation’s fascinating history.

Following are the planned dates of all committee and general meetings and venues. We will update these on a regular basis together with “*sausage sizzle dates*” and any other up-coming events.

### **COMING EVENTS**

#### **JUNE**

13<sup>th</sup> Executive committee meeting  
10:30am.

24<sup>th</sup> “Sausage Sizzle”, Bunnings, Kings Meadows 8:30am until 5:00pm

#### **JULY**

05<sup>th</sup> Day trip to Scottsdale RSL contact Iain Pinkard on 0418-597130.

11<sup>th</sup> General meeting 5:30pm RSL Club, Launceston with guest speaker to follow.

22<sup>nd</sup> “Sausage Sizzle” Bunnings, Kings Meadows 8:30am until 5:00pm

#### **AUGUST**

08<sup>th</sup> Executive committee meeting  
10:30am.

26<sup>th</sup> “Sausage Sizzle”, Bunnings Kings Meadows 8:30am until 5:00pm.

#### **SEPTEMBER**

01<sup>st</sup> Opening of “Flying by the Seat of their Pants” exhibition, QV Museum and Art Gallery Inveresk.

08<sup>th</sup> “In the Air” Seminar, Launceston Church Grammar School. An all-day event.

12<sup>th</sup> General meeting 5:30pm RSL Club, Launceston with guest speaker to follow.

23<sup>rd</sup> “Sausage Sizzle” Bunnings, Kings Meadows 8:30am until 5:00pm.

# In The Air Aviation Seminar



*Friday 8 September 2023*

**Launceston Church Grammar School,  
Mowbray Campus, Button Street**

**Seminar registration \$50 (9.30am -  
5.00pm) and evening Soiree \$25  
commencing at 6.00pm**

**An all-day registration (Seminar and Soiree \$75) • Guests to Soiree**

**\$25 each RSVP to [info@tahs.org.au](mailto:info@tahs.org.au)**

Payment to Tasmanian Aviation Historical Society  
BSB: 807 009 A/C No: 30114571 Reference your name.

6

Aviation seminar brought to you by the Tasmanian Aviation Historical Society [tahs.org.au](http://tahs.org.au)



**Tasmanian Aviation  
Historical Society**



H. Gatty

I. Holyman

D. Warren

H. Fysh

A. Long

F. Huxley

C. SHEARLING