



**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 16 - DECEMBER 2023

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**TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

Welcome to the 16th edition of our
quarterly newsletter “*Roaring Forties*”

TAHS - Office Bearers, 2023.

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CHRISTMAS EDITION

A feature of this edition is a story on the
visit to Hobart, in 1938, of Imperial
Airways flying boat the Centaurus.

Furthermore, a short article on just how
significant the role played by Tasmanians
in the development of Australian aviation.

This edition, historian Lindsay Millar,
presents a history of the Auster
aircraft family and its involvement in
Australian and Tasmanian aviation with
a special mention of our “Rosie”.

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 16

Further Tasmanian history is found in the
article concerning the historical
significance of Hobart and Launceston’s
Control Towers.

This edition also includes a review of our
“In the Air Seminar”, held in September at
the Launceston Church Grammar School,
together with the opening of the exhibition
“Flying by the Seat of Their Pants” at the
QV Museum Inveresk.

A small article on four Tasmanian shows
the huge amount of influence Tasmania
had in the development of civil aviation
and Peter (Captain Sizzle!) Manktelow
presents a small piece of activities
relaying to an overseas colleague. Not
forgetting the ladies, two short pieces on
the lives of two pioneering Tasmanian
born lady pilots.

Some Tasmanian, Australian and overseas
news together with our coming events
completes this edition.

From all at TAHS, have a safe and merry
Christmas and a Happy New Year.



Tasmania's Giant Visitor. "The Centaurus" G-ADUT
by W Dearing

In the early afternoon on Tuesday 18 January 1938, a further page was added to Tasmania's aviation history when the 18 ton Imperial Airways Empire flying boat G-ADUT, touched down on Hobart's Derwent River.

En-route from Adelaide, the giant aircraft overflew Stanley, Burnie, Devonport and Launceston before arriving in Hobart as part of the England, Australia, New Zealand survey flight.

Few events attracted so much interest leading up to the aircraft's arrival as published in the Hobart Mercury

"If one of the objectives of the visit is to make us more air-minded, success has been achieved beforehand particularly in the youth of Tasmania so stirred by this epoch making event." ⁽¹⁾



Photo of the Centaurus G-ADUT
courtesy Air History.

The aircraft will remain in Hobart for a week before heading to Sydney.

The huge aircraft, registered Short S-23 "C" Class Empire Flying Boat c/n

S.811, was the third Empire boat to be completed and flown by Short Bros at Rochester, Kent for Imperial Airways London and duly registered G-ADUT. The cost of the aircraft, as shown on the official order, was 37,800 English pounds which converts to approximately \$7 million dollars Australian.

The aircraft was powered by four 920 hp Bristol Pegasus radial engines, carried 1,010 gallons of fuel in four fuel tanks that provided a flight duration of approximately 7 hours and 30 minutes, had a still air range of 1,078 nautical miles and an all-up weight of 40,500 lbs.



Flight deck photo of G -ADUT courtesy of Pinterest.

The crew for the England, Australia, New Zealand flight was Capt J W Burgess and F/O C F Elder. The aircraft also carried a radio operator, a ship's clerk (who was the equivalent of a purser on a liner), and a steward. The flights covered a distance of 32,498 miles in a time of 63 days.

An unusual feature was the inclusion of a Sperry automatic pilot panel, common in America, but unusual in British commercial aircraft. ⁽²⁾

After landing in Hobart, the selected few perchance had an opportunity to see the

luxurious comfort afforded to the passengers wealthy enough to fly in the aircraft.

The Centaurus is double-decked and has four cabins, including a smoking cabin and a promenade saloon.



Photo courtesy of Pinterest.

On day flights the flying boat accommodates 24 passengers and on night flights, 16 when the made-up sleeping berths occupy more room. The occupant of a chair can sit up, lounge or lie right back, adjusting the chair without having to move from the cushioned seat. Passengers have their own reading lights and ventilators, which they control themselves and there is a bell for the steward beside each light switch. ⁽³⁾



The Centaurus crew prior to departure from England. Courtesy of Getty Images.

Such was the luxury of this aircraft and following its departure back to the

mainland, it was to be some years before Hobart was to receive other visits by flying boats. World War 2 was looming and the Centaurus and flying boats were needed in another role.

The RAAF, in due course, was to acquire five Empire Flying Boats. Two "swaps" were made to achieve this. The first two swaps consisted of Centaurus G-ADUT that carried the RAAF registration as A18-10 from Sep 1939 and Calypso G-AEUA as A18-1. Also, from Sep 1939, RAAF 11 Squadron operated Centaurus and Calypso, initially out of Port Moresby with ex QEA pilots who had been on the RAAF reserve and transferred to full time RAAF duty, as did other QEA staff. ⁽⁴⁾



The Centaurus now RAAF A18-10. Photo courtesy of Air History.

On 03 March 1942 the Centaurus A18-10 was destroyed by enemy action in Broome Harbour, thus ending a small part of Tasmania's aviation history.

Acknowledgements:

1. *Hobart Mercury 18 Jan 1939 Page 5*
2. *Aussie Airliners.org*
3. *Adelaide Newspaper 05 Jan 1938 Page 5*
4. *RAAF Registration History*

Four Tasmanians
By W Dearing

In the early to mid-1930's, aviation was expanding at an incredible rate, with new aircraft and the development of new routes, offering the travelling public an exciting mode of transportation.

Aviation at this time was full of visionaries who were determined to advance this new mode of travel. People like Hudson-Fysh, Harold Gatty and the Holyman brothers could see a future for passenger carrying aircraft, not only throughout Australia but east and west to the Pacific, America and England.



Above Harold Gatty photo courtesy of Pinterest and below Hudson Fysh photo courtesy of National Gallery.



Both Gatty and Hudson-Fysh were similar in many ways. Both were reserved and enjoyed the quiet solitude of river or lake fishing, but would adopt a businesslike air when it came to work and aviation.

Then there were the Holyman brothers who were part of a major Australian shipping company but could also see the future of this exciting new transportation mode.



The Holyman brothers Victor (left) and Ivan TAHS file photo.

The brothers expanded their operations into aviation forming Holyman's Airways and following the tragic death of Victor Holyman, Ivan continued to expand the airline's operation, establishing Australian National Airways.

Enter the Prime Minister of Australia, Joseph Lyons, who had a reputation of being a shrewd businessman and whose government was driven by strong pro-British sympathies. Which meant imposing an embargo on the importation of American aircraft, thus giving Britain a virtual monopoly.



Prime Minister Joseph Lyons Photo courtesy of Wikipedia.

So, the stage was set. Gatty at this time was representing Donald Douglas of Douglas Aircraft, who had just launched the DC 2 aircraft that would become the famous DC 3. The Douglas Aircraft company was keen to construct a factory on Australian soil, however Gatty was unable to get Lyons agreement to allow the construction to commence. Furthermore, whilst it was never documented, it was highly likely that Gatty and Ivan Holyman met to discuss the likelihood of Holyman's Airways purchasing the DC-2.

Hudson-Fysh, on the other hand, supported the Lyons government relating to the purchase of British aircraft. In the early 1930's a Qantas staff circular proclaimed "Let Us Think and Act Imperially".

So, both airlines purchased the British DH-86 aircraft over the DC-2. Tragically, two of Holyman's Airways and one Qantas aircraft crashed and on investigation it was found that the British aircraft had an inherent fin design that gave the aircraft poor directional stability. This problem resulted in the aircraft occasionally yawing violently to the left and, if not corrected

quickly, could enter a flat spin. The government subsequently, if not reluctantly, relinquished the embargo and the DC-2 ultimately arrived in Australia.



Above model of Holman's Airways DC-2 and below photo Qantas DH-86. TAHS file photos.



This era, then, became a significant period in today's modern commercial aviation that linked Australian states and ultimately the world, overcoming the vast distances in modern safe aircraft.

The discussions and decisions that were made by these four men help pave the way for today's travelling public. In a way it could be argued that this was but one of the many progressive steps taken in Australia's development and it possibly is true.

But in the development of aviation and our history, it is important, at least for our state, to remember the fact that these four men..

"WERE ALL TASMANIANS."

AND A HAROLD GATTY FOLLOW UP.....

Speaking of Gatty, Peter Manktelow sent this interesting article he had received from a colleague in Thailand that illustrates how effective Gatty's navigation skills and practises were.

Navigation.

My good buddy Steve (TAHS member in Thailand) once flew regular trips in the late 1970's to remote single offshore oil rigs in the Gulf of Mexico. His mount was a Bell 47 on "bags". Bags are what we call the rubber inflated floats, that allow a water landing if an emergency so required.

The only navigation equipment he had was his wristwatch and a liquid magnetic compass. He could work out his planned groundspeed with the forecast wind as well as the heading he should fly, however, forecasts are just that. They are never 100% correct.

The "47" usually cruised at 60 knots Indicated Air Speed (IAS) maximum. So, if there was a nil wind, he was travelling over the water at 1 nautical mile per minute. Now this was all based-on forecast wind and that the rig was 60 nautical miles offshore. What "trick" could he use to guarantee that after 60 minutes + or - of flying time over a featureless ocean, he would arrive at his destination?

When he told me how, I was impressed.



TAHS file photo of Bell 47 on bags.

"I later read Harold Gatty's book (in which Lindbergh described him as the Prince of Navigator's), Gatty used the same little trick when he was navigating Wiley Post in to a township on a river in failing light and minimum fuel in Siberia. He could not afford to miss his target township."

So, what was this little trick? Back to Steve in his Bell 47 in the Gulf of Mexico.

He departs his base which is on the coast for this single offshore platform that is 60 nm bearing 360 degrees from his base. The wind is 270/10 (out of the west at 10 knots). At 10 knots of wind over the sea it produces white caps. These white caps are also streaked and show the direction of the wind. And he purposely steers a heading of 005 degrees so that after 60 minutes (plus or minus) he will be downwind of his target and only needs to turn left (90 degrees) in order to close the distance from his platform. The 1 in 60 rule applies and would have him within 5 miles of the rig on his port side. Neat, huh?

Who needs a GPS!

***The Auster Aircraft in Australia
and Tasmania - a history by
Lindsay Millar***

Between 1930 and 1939 Australians began to realise that aircraft had the ability to significantly reduce travel times within this large and sparsely populated continent. To quote the Reverend John Flynn, the aircraft will help solve an Australian problem known as “the tyranny of distance.”

Following World War 2 the shortage of American dollars meant the only light aircraft available for sale were built in England, with the Auster Aircraft Company playing a major role in the supply of these aircraft. The company built two, three and four seat fabric covered tail wheel aircraft that could handle rough conditions and were relatively simple to maintain and repair. This made them ideal for Australia’s limited facilities and remote areas that required this new mode of transport.

It is estimated that following the end of World War 2, around 100 various ex- military models became available with over 150 new Auster aircraft being sold in Australia. The availability of these aircraft enabled Australia’s general aviation industry to become established.

The Auster was used by farmers, mining companies, surveying, search and rescue, police, flying training, access to offshore islands and remote areas, recreational flying and delivery of medical care. Such was the versatility of the aircraft. Incredibly, some 70 plus years on, a number of Auster aircraft are still flying in Australia.



***“A fine aerial shot of the Tasmanian Aero Clubs 4-seater Auster J 5, VH-KBP”,
courtesy of Lindsay Millar.***

Tasmania also proved to be an ideal area for aviation and the Auster to develop. The aircraft allowed farmers to operate farming operations in separate areas of the state and offshore islands, in particular Flinders and King Islands, whilst fisherman Dick Ritchey began using an Auster to spot and net large schools of fish in particular, salmon.

Auster aircraft also provided aero medical and dental services to isolated areas and islands for some years by the newly formed Royal Flying Doctor Service. The versatility and simplicity of the aircraft allowed anything that could fit onboard or hung outside could be carried. From crop dusting to flying in Antarctica such was the life of the Auster.

Notable Tasmanian aviators including Winnaleah farmer Rex Tucker, Flinders Islands Alf Stackhouse, Scottsdale farmer Herb Nicholls and Reg Munro of “Munro Aviation” fame all owned an Auster. Many more Auster aircraft were privately owned with some 20 various models estimated to have operated in the state.

By 1960 the first models of all metal light aircraft, both single and multi-engine, became available from America and with the importation of large numbers of Piper, Cessna and Beechcraft aircraft the demise of the Auster company as an aircraft producer became apparent.

So, we arrive at the Auster Autocrat named “Rosie”. As discussed in earlier newsletters “Rosie” was the property of Hobart member Rob Gard for over 30 years. Fortunately, Rob donated the aircraft to TAHS as an exhibit in a future museum.



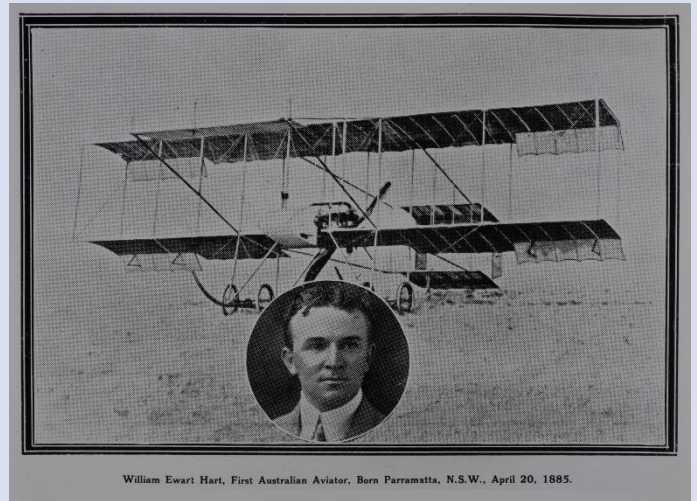
“Rosie the Auster Autocrat”

Safely stored in a container with regular checks being made by Peter Manktelow and his team. The aircraft will be stored until such time as she can be placed on display for all to see, and appreciate, the family of Auster aircraft that formed such an important part of Tasmanian and Australia’s aviation history.



Do you know who was Australia’s first licensed pilot?

The holder of Australia’s first Pilot’s Licence was Parramatta dentist W E Hart, who in 1911 purchased a Bristol biplane and taught himself to fly it well enough to qualify for the Royal Aero Clubs Aviator’s Certificate in November of that year.



“Photo courtesy of Parramatta History and Heritage Collection.”

In 1916 Hart went to the Middle East as a trainer with the Number 1 Squadron of the Australian Flying Corps.

Following the war he returned to dentistry and died in 1943, a forgotten pioneer. ⁽¹⁾

Acknowledgements:

(1) Parramatta History and Heritage Collection.

***Tasmania's Historic Air Traffic
Control Towers
By W Dearing***

The era following World War 1 saw great advancements in aviation. Aircraft became more than a fighting machine and a new mode of transport had been born.

Australia, with the country's vast area and off-shore islands, readily accepted this new mode of transportation and Tasmania, due to its isolation from the mainland, quickly recognised the economic value of the aircraft. Aviation developed at a break neck speed but had a tendency to overlook the basic infrastructure required to support this new industry. A significant part of this composition was the safety of both the aircraft and passengers. So was born the Department of Civil Aviation. Created in 1938, one of its seven branches concerned flying operations that included navigational aids, mandatory radios in aircraft and airport control towers. This is where our story begins.



Tasmania has always enjoyed the reputation of being a major player in the development of Australia's aviation history and once again the island state played host to a further historical scene. Tasmania is the home of two air traffic control towers, in Launceston and Hobart. The towers are two of only three operational post war towers, the third tower being at Victoria's Essendon airport.

The Hobart ATC tower is of historical significance in a national context, as a rare and representative surviving example of a post-World War II era control tower equipped to an international standard following guidelines devised by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

It was one of eight Australian ATC towers built to the same operational specifications between 1952 and 1959 in the first major phase of control towers development in the post-WWII period. The Hobart tower was built between 1956 and 1958, and commissioned in 1958. It is one of the oldest operational towers in Australia. Its contemporaries are the Essendon ATC and Launceston, which is believed to have been commissioned in 1958.



***“Hobart tower interior Photo courtesy of
Civil Aviation Historical Society circa
1958.”***

All three were designed by the Commonwealth of Australia Department of Works (Victoria & Tasmania Branch) for the Department of Civil Aviation. The building comprises a two-storey base building surmounted by an octagonal cabin. The cabin is raised on a partly chamfered and partly square duct and service drum. On three sides, an observation deck cantilevers from the flat roof of the base building. To the west the

walkway is supported on the base of the broader stairwell.

The ATC tower was a central element of the new Hobart Airport at Lanhern, which replaced Cambridge Aerodrome as the city's primary airport in 1956. Like the original terminal building, the tower was not complete by the time daylight operations commenced at the airport, however the tower has been used for its intended purpose since completion and is relatively intact. The ATC tower is situated on a hill to the west of the runway, and north-west of the terminal buildings. Hobart ATC tower is unusual and may be unique in Australia in that it serves two airfields: Cambridge Aerodrome (now a general aviation airfield); and Hobart International Airport, approximately two kilometres to the east.



“Hobart Airport Control Tower photo courtesy of The Mercury.”

Launceston's control tower shares a similar historical significance to that of Hobart. Built between 1952 and 1958 it

was commissioned in 1958. The tower is a two-story construction surmounted by an octagonal cabin built to the same operational specifications as is Hobart. The cabin console faces east, with the runway in the fore-ground and Mt Arthur and Mt Barrow in the distance. A remote VHF site at Mt Barrow is linked to the tower's equipment room. The roof of the cabin is approximately 10 metres above ground level.



“Above photo of Launceston Control Tower and below a view to the north of the runway and taxiway alpha.”



Just another part of Tasmanian aviation history! ⁽¹⁾

Acknowledgement:

(1) Air Services Australia Heritage Register

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

Since Laurie Johnson's inaugural flight to Flinders Island way back in 1932, aviators, business men and the public at large were quick to see the potential value of the aircraft both as a form of public transport and a means of transportation of supplies and materials to Tasmania. Suddenly the demon known as Bass Strait, with her fickle weather patterns, could now be conquered.

From that day in March 1932, numerous operators have provided services for passengers and freight to the Bass Strait Islands and Tasmania. Now, only the two major airlines and some smaller regional organisations still offer these services. But we take this moment to reflect on two parties that provided aircraft and people that are now ***"gone but not forgotten"***.

IPEC AIR PTY LTD

The Australian air freight industry underwent a significant change in February 1963. It was then that IPEC Air Pty Ltd commenced regular freight operations using a DC-3 aircraft chartered from Brain and Brown, operating three services per night between Melbourne and Launceston.

In 1977 IPEC imported two Argosy aircraft, followed by a further two in 1978 that were introduced to the Bass Strait run in October 1978. During this period, TAA and Ansett were the only operators that were permitted to carry freight on a scheduled service. The only exception being the route between Tasmania and the mainland.

Other operators such as Brain and Brown, Forrestair, Air Express and Fleet Air also operated specialised freighters.

These companies operated older DC-3, DC-4 and Bristol Freighters that were unsuitable and uneconomic and were all subsequently taken over or ceased operations.



Photo IPEC Argosy aircraft courtesy of Pinterest.

In 1979 IPEC commenced operating services between Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane using a chartered East West Airlines Fokker F 27 Friendship and in 1982 purchased a Douglas DC-9. ⁽¹⁾

In March 1982, IPEC was finally issued a licence for the carriage of freight only between Essendon and Launceston with the licence subsequently extended to include Sydney, Brisbane and Rockhampton and Adelaide.



Photo IPEC Douglas DC-9 freighter courtesy of Pinterest.

In October 1982 IPEC introduced the Douglas DC-9-33F freighter operating between Melbourne, Launceston and Hobart. This was the first large jet aircraft to be used in Australian domestic services by a freight only operator. The aircraft was customised using more powerful engines and a stronger floor that enabled the aircraft to carry up to 18 tonnes of freight.

IPEC continued to operate between the mainland and Tasmania until 1998 when they were taken over by Toll and rebranded Toll IPEC, ending a further era in Tasmania's aviation history.

Acknowledgements:

1. Wikipedia 31 Oct 2023.

AUS-AIR

Aus-Air was a small regional airline established in 1956 and commenced operations out of Essendon airport in November 1986 between Essendon airport and Smithton. In July 1987 the company established its home base at Moorabbin Airport.

The airline provided services between the Bass Strait Islands, Smithton, Burnie and Launceston operating a fleet of 2 Embraer EMB 110 Bandeirante, 4 Piper Chieftain and 2 Piper Navajo aircraft.



An Aus-Air Bandeirante at Moorabbin Airport circa 1998 courtesy of Wikipedia.

A regular visitor to the Bass Strait Islands and Launceston, Aus-Air provided a valuable link to the mainland for both the islands and North West Coast, in addition to an alternative to Launceston travellers.

During the mid-1990's Aus-Air employed up to 50 people, however the company encountered financial difficulties and was placed in administration. The company and its assets were offered for sale but, with no buyer found, ceased operations on 04 July 1999. ⁽¹⁾



Photo Aus-Air Chieftain Moorabbin Airport courtesy of Pinterest.



Aerial photo of Moorabbin Airport courtesy of Sun-Herald.

Acknowledgements:

1. Wikipedia 31 Oct 2023.

TASMANIA'S FORGOTTEN

AVIATION HEROES

Charles William Hay

Aviation was still in its infancy during World War I, but that did not prevent Tasmanians from taking their place among those “magnificent men and their flying machines”. One of them was Charles Hay, a sawmiller’s son from Tasmania’s far south.

Born at Lady Bay, northeast of Southport, Tasmania in March 1886, he was the eldest child and only son of Charles and Elizabeth Hay. His sisters were Ruby, Pearl, Edith Anne and Jennie. His leisure time was often spent with his great friend Albert Woolley.



Great mates and brothers in arms Albert Woolley and Charles Hay before the war.

After finishing his education, he served an apprenticeship as a mechanical engineer with his father in his business.

Charles was 29 and living at Ravenshoe (a timber milling town on Queensland’s Atherton Tablelands), when he enlisted in January 1915. He had no previous military experience but had been a member of a rifle club. He was initially allotted to the Light Horse as a trooper and then to the Army Service Corps as a driver.

While on service in France in 1917, he transferred to the Australian Flying Corps in April 1917.

After training in England, he graduated as a flying officer that November and was promoted to lieutenant in February 1918. During a training exercise on April 8th 1918, he misjudged the height of his aircraft above the sea and ended up diving into the water off the coast near Montrose, Scotland.

His body was not recovered and a court of inquiry found that he had died as the result of an accident. He was 32.

The inquiry heard that he had been flying a Sopwith Camel single-seater biplane fighter aircraft. Of his nearly 50 hours of solo flying time, just under six hours had been spent in the Camel. Giving evidence, Captain R.A. James of the Royal Air Force, said Charles had been carrying out aerial gunnery practice when he crashed. Captain James said Charles had been flying his favourite aircraft.

Another witness, Second Lieutenant P. Brindle of the RAF, said he saw the aircraft spinning from about 2000 feet (600 metres). At about 300 feet (90m) it stopped spinning and crashed into the sea.

“In my opinion Second Lieutenant Hay had control of the machine but misjudged his height from the water,” the witness said. Another witness agreed that Charles had been in control of the aircraft but atmospheric conditions could easily have caused an error in judging its height.



World War I soldier and pilot Charles William Hay.

His parents were advised that a headstone had been erected in Charles’ memory at the Montrose Cemetery and he is also commemorated among nearly 1000 airmen of the empire at the Arras Flying Services Memorial in France. Late in December 1918, Mrs Hay received several parcels containing her only son’s personal effects, including items of clothing, a kit bag, photos, letters, books, and three “wings” in an envelope.

Lieutenant Charles William Hay is remembered at tree 372 on the Soldiers’ Memorial Avenue and on the Hobart Town Hall honour board. His friend and brother-in-law, Albert Woolley, was killed in action at Polygon Wood, also aged 32 and is remembered at tree number 273.

Acknowledgements:

Article and photos courtesy of Mercury Newspaper 28 August 2018.

TASMANIA’S AVIATION MEMORIES

FROM AN UNKNOWN AUTHOR

- “Dad and Mum had their first flight together on Sunday 27 April 1941, which was Mum’s first flight, when returning home from their honeymoon on a flight from Hobart to Western Junction that took just over 30 minutes. It would be another nine years before their next flight, again late April 1950, this time to Melbourne and onward to Sydney and on this time taking Yvonne and I with them.

Both flights across Bass Strait was aboard a new and modern aircraft of the time – a four engine DC4 Skymaster - which to us seemed very large in comparison to the DC 3’s that had mostly been operating previously.



**TAHS file photo of ANA DC-4 Skymaster
VH-ANA**

A brochure of 1950 described them as “giants of the sky” and from wing tip to wing tip measured 117ft 6 ins and were powered by four 1450hp propellor driven engines. They carried a crew of four, up to forty passengers, plus 4,000lb of freight.”

“The golden era of aviation”.



**Tasmanian Aviation
Historical Society**

IN THE AIR AVIATION SEMINAR 2023 SUMMARY

By P Richards

The 'IN THE AIR' Aviation Seminar, held on Friday 8 September 2023, was a moral, financial and resounding success. We attracted 48 paying registrants to the seminar and 42 to the Soiree, along with several gratis participants.



*Tasmanian Premier Jeremy Rockliff,
MHA, opening the 2023 seminar.*

May I firstly thank all members of the sub-committee who worked and supported the seminar. Secondly, our most grateful thanks to the Launceston Church Grammar School (LCGS) for the venue and catering, 'Sound House' for providing the sound amplification, and the LCGS String Quartet, entertaining guests at the Soiree. A special thanks to both Fiona Symons (Careers Officer and Danni Monypenny (Events Coordinator).



*TAHS Historian Lindsay Millar, OAM,
and convenor Paul Richards, AM.*

With registrations exceeding 40 we were in a sound financial position as we had W.D. Booth Charitable Trust underwriting the event, as well as financial assistance from Glenshiel Flowers, Central Launceston and Cameron's Accounting. The performance of our five mentors and six speakers were well received in the format that we presented them, specifically, in block sections. The quality of the speakers and the diversity of age, career experiences and gender were great. Overall, the students were very engaged and the 100 Grade 10 students thoroughly enjoyed the session with our mentoring theme "*Where Has Aviation Taken Me*".



Nicole Henty, CEO, RFDS, Tasmania.

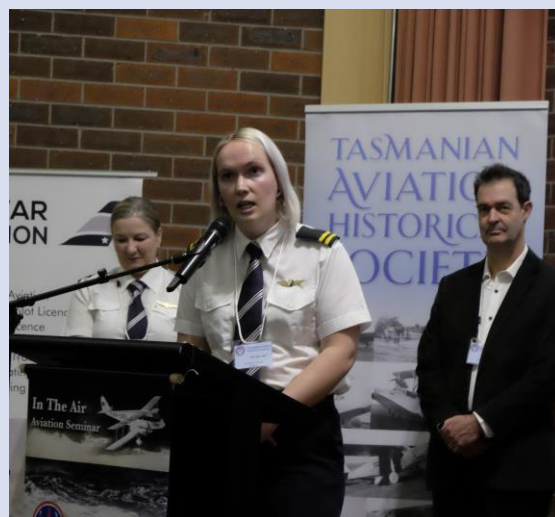


Hobart speaker John Livermore delivers the life of Harold Gatty

Several banners and aviation memorabilia were on display with two large model aeroplanes from Phoenix Flyers. Thank you to all of our supporters. Unfortunately, due to inclement weather the RFDS Simulator was not visited as often during the day as we had wished. Likewise, it was equally unfortunate that Helicopter Resources were unable to make it as the pilot Hoey Stobart had been called away to the Antarctic for a retrieval and could not get back in time to land on the school oval.



LCGS students inspect the RFDS simulator



Georgia Rundle speaks on career opportunities in aviation.

The Soiree was a real hit as everyone relaxed after such a busy day. The LCGS String Quartet was very well received as was Adam's Distillery whisky tasting, along with samples of wine and beer from Robin Holyman's cellar and the all-day catering by LCGS. A special thanks has been forwarded to the LCGS team for their support and help. (Principal, Dale Bennet, V. Principal, Nick Foster, Careers Officer, Fiona Symons, Mark – Catering, Danni Monypenny-Events Coordinator) and all financial and in-kind supporters.



The day's work done now time to relax and enjoy.

Acknowledgements:

All photos courtesy of TAHS member Rod Oliver,

***Opening night of the TAHS
“Flying by the Seat of Their Pants”
Exhibition, QV Museum Inveresk,
Friday 01 September.***

By Andrew Johnson



Entrance to the exhibition.

Touring exhibition - Pioneer Aviation in Bass Strait from 1919 to 1939.

The exhibition has enjoyed many visitors with positive feedback whilst on display at the Queen Victoria Museum Inveresk, Launceston. The larger gallery space of around 150 m² allowed us to introduce more stories and expand on the existing aviation history, as well as to incorporate additional artifacts in support of the exhibition.

Amongst these new pieces was the Holyman Bell that was kindly on loan from Launceston Airport. This large brass bell played an important role when travelling with Holyman's Airways, being rung to indicate the aircraft was ready to board.

The engine from the Desoutter "Miss Flinders" was also on display for the first time. This is an excellent example of the

Gipsy Major engine that powered so many aircraft in the 1930s and 40s.



Above one of the many models of the early pioneer aircraft and below the guests enjoying the exhibition.



Something much smaller, but with enormous Tasmanian aviation significance, was the compass from Arthur Long's Bouton Paul P.9 that made the first crossing of Bass Strait in 1919. This was donated by the Long family recently and complimented the exhibition perfectly.

“Flying by the Seat of Their Pants”, will continue its tour of Bass Strait, opening at King Island airport around mid December through to April. The island played an important part in Bass Strait's pioneering aviation so it is appropriate the exhibition is made available to the island's people and visitors.

Acknowledgements:

All photos courtesy of Andrew Johnson collection.

TASMANIA'S WOMEN PILOTS

FRANCES JACKSON



Born: 23 June 1902

Died: 1 October 1988

"A fearless, skilful pilot, having excellent control of her machine"

- *The Examiner*, 2 March 1931

Frances Isabel Jackson (nee Hyatt, later Nichols) ⁽¹⁾

Frances Jackson was a pioneer Tasmanian aviator during the 1930s, a time when aviation captured the public imagination as an unusual, exciting and dangerous activity.

Frances Isabel Hyatt was born at Dunalley in 1902 and married Oswald Jackson in 1919. The couple lived at Murdunna.

Women had been disallowed from learning to fly in Australia until 1927 and were not permitted to fly in Tasmania for some time afterwards.

In 1930, Frances enrolled in the Goulburn Aero Club in New South Wales and gained a Class A (private) pilot licence in December. Frances was the first woman to fly to and from Goulburn and Mascot (Sydney), and was praised for flying part of the route on instruments only, due to poor visibility.

On returning to Tasmania, Frances became an active member of the Australian Aero Club (Tasmanian Section) and competed

in local and interstate aerial pageants and races. She won numerous trophies with the Australian Aero Club (Tasmanian Section), including the Spot Landing in August 1931; the Tasmanian Aerial Derby Handicap (Holyman Cup) in 1932; the Tasmanian Aerial Oakes in March 1934; Head of the Air Race at Cambridge in 1937 and the President's Challenge Shield, also in 1937.



TAHS file photo of Frances and her aircraft

Her success in the air generated publicity about the "fearless, skilful pilot, having excellent control of her machine" (*The Examiner* 2 March 1931), who "thrilled the crowds, tossing her machine around with fearless ease" (*The Mercury* 9 December 1977). On 25 March 1937, *The Mercury* described Frances Jackson as "the foremost air woman in this State".

Frances appeared to lose interest in flying after her first husband died in 1938. In the 1940s, she remarried local farmer and builder, Bill Nichols and was again widowed in 1963. The couple did not have children but fostered two girls.

Frances' pioneer aerial exploits were not forgotten. Several of her trophies are on display at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. ⁽²⁾

Acknowledgements:

1. *The Examiner* 02 March 1931.
2. *Tasmanian Government Honour Roe of Women.*

TASMANIA'S WOMEN PILOTS

MARY BELL

Mary Bell was a pioneer for women's contributions to the RAAF during war times, long before women were welcomed. She was the founding leader of the Women's Air Training Corps (WATC) and later the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF).

Bell, whose maiden name was Fernandes, was born in Launceston Tasmania in 1903 and attended the Launceston Church Grammar School, before, at the age of 14 years, commencing work at a Launceston solicitor's office. In March 1923 she married RAAF officer John Bell, a WWI Gallipoli and Australian Flying Corps veteran.

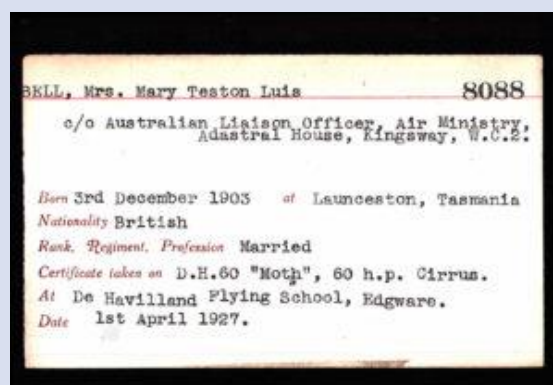


***Mary Bell at a WATC Meeting 1941.
Photo Courtesy of Wikipedia***

From 1925 until 1928 the Bell's lived in England whilst her husband attended the RAF Staff College, Andover.

Interested in aviation since her teens she learnt to fly at the age of 24 in 1927 and received her Grade "A" private pilot's licence that same year.

Returning to Australia in 1928, she became the first female to gain a licence in Victoria and the sixth in Australia.



***Bell's licence certificate Photo courtesy
of Wikipedia.***

By 1939, the two were living in Brisbane, where Bell first became leader of the 40 women-strong Women's National Emergency Legion Air Wing, which was an early volunteer group that assisted with aircraft maintenance during war times.

This group later became the WATC, a female-driven volunteer organisation, that provided support to the RAAF during WWII. The WATC grew to be a national organisation, with Bell as its Australian Commandant. When WWII broke, Bell and the WATC pushed the RAAF to allow women to assist with the war effort for the first time in forming the WAAAF. Formally established on 25 March, the WAAAF was the first and largest uniformed women's wartime service in the country, which burgeoned to more than 18,000 members by 1944.

Following the end of World War 2 the Bells left the forces, becoming farmers in Victoria and subsequently Tasmania. Bell died in Ulverstone in 1979. ⁽¹⁾

Acknowledgements:

(1) Wikipedia.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

LOCKHEED L-188 ELECTRA

The 1950s was a transitional period for Australia's two major domestic airlines, Ansett-ANA and TAA (Trans Australia Airlines) and its international airline Qantas. The decade began with the carriers operating all piston engine aircraft and concluded with a number of turbo-prop powered types being introduced to the respective fleets. Among the new types was the Lockheed L-188 Electra.

In comparison with other aircraft types flown by Australia's major airlines, Electra numbers were comparatively small, with only 11 being operated between the three major carriers. Despite their limited numbers, they proved to be a worthy and reliable airframe, bridging the gap between piston power and the forthcoming jet era.



TAHS file photo TAA Electra.

Built by the American Lockheed Corporation, the Electra came in response to requests (particularly from Capitol Airlines and American Airlines), for a short/medium haul airliner carrying 60-70 passengers over an average range of 700 miles (1300 km). American Airlines placed an order for 35 Electra's in June 1955, followed shortly by an order from Eastern Airlines for an additional 40 aircraft. Thus committed, Lockheed proceeded with final design work, resulting in the prototype being completed by December 1957. The L-188 project, as it had been known prior

to the name Electra being bestowed on it, could boast some impressive features. A low wing aircraft, powered by four Allison 501 turbo-prop engines (similar to the power plants found in the C-130 Hercules and P-3 Orion), providing a cruising speed of 350 knots/650kmh at an altitude of 28,000 feet and carrying 80 passengers. Additionally, range was increased to well in excess of 2,000 nautical miles/3,700 km, allowing the aircraft to operate direct Melbourne-Perth services. ⁽¹⁾

Reg Ansett had visited Lockheed in 1957 and on his return to Australia, announced he had ordered four L-188s for his airline. Meanwhile, TAA had been carrying out its own research, which led to it wanting to procure the Caravelle, a short/medium range twin jet built by French manufacturer Sud Aviation. On the other hand, Qantas elected to go with the Electra, as it believed it would best suit its shorter routes into the Asia/Pacific region. In May 1958, the Federal government advised that under the shortly to be enacted Airlines Equipment Bill 1, both Ansett-ANA and TAA would each have allocated two Electras and Qantas four. Ansett-ANA was first to introduce the Electra to Australia with the arrival of VH-RMA. Because of TAA's preference for Caravelle aircraft and the Federal government's decision to back the Electra instead, TAA's first L-188 did not arrive until June 1959. ⁽²⁾



ANSETT Electra, photo courtesy of Pinterest.

Electra's quickly proved to be popular with the travelling public, reflected by the airlines soon recording high load factors. However, a problem did shortly arise for Electra operators, including those in Australia, when a high noise level and vibration became apparent in the forward cabin, identified as being caused by propeller resonance. Lockheed's solution called for modification to the engine nacelles. Under Lockheed supervision, work was carried out locally by the airline whereby the engines were given an upward tilt of three degrees, the task taking six days to complete. (3)



QANTAS Electra photo courtesy of Qantas.

Both Australian domestic airlines added a third Electra to their fleets by September 1960. These six aircraft maintained their dominant role for the next few years until the arrival of Australia's first commercial jet aircraft, the Boeing B727, in October 1964. As more jet aircraft were introduced, the Electra's began to be phased out, with Qantas being the first to wind down its fleet between 1965- 1970 and TAA withdrawing their L-188s through 1970-1971.

Ansett (from November 1968 renamed Ansett Airlines of Australia), chose another career for its Electra's when, in 1972, they were converted in the US to a freighter configuration. In their new guise, the Electra's could uplift over 15 tonnes of either palletised or bulk freight. With the

success of Ansett Airfreight, a fourth Electra freighter was purchased in 1975.



Ansett Electra freight aircraft courtesy of Pinterest. Note the registration VH-RMA after Reginald Myles Ansett.

For many years these aircraft successfully plied their trade across Australia, usually during the night hours (in airline parlance, "back of the clock"), carrying all manner of goods ranging from vegetables to race horses. Unofficially known as "Wombat Airlines" by their crew, a wombat logo normally appeared near the cockpit, reflecting the nocturnal nature of their operations. After 25 years of service with Ansett, the Electra's were withdrawn from service in 1984, closing an era which illustrated the aircraft's flexibility and strength to operate in both passenger and freight roles. Interestingly, the Electra is to date the last commercially built aircraft by Lockheed, to be operated by Australian airlines. (4)

Acknowledgements

1. *Eric Allen: Airlines in Australian Service Vol 1 & 2*
2. *Samuel Brimson: Ansett: The story of an Airline.*
3. *P J Gates Electra: The Lockheed L-188*
4. *Stewart Wilson: Then Story of the Rise and Fall of Ansett*

DO YOU REMEMBER?

HISTORY FROM YESTER-YEAR.

1914 - On 16 July, Australia's first Airmail flight left Melbourne for Sydney in Maurice Gillaux's Bleriot monoplane arriving two and a half days later.

1916 – In January, Number 1 Squadron of the Australian Flying Corps (AFC) was formed at Point Cook, arriving at Suez on 11 April.

1928 – Between 30 May and 09 June, Kingsford-Smith, Ulm, Lyon and Warner completed the first crossing of the Pacific from America to Australia in the Fokker F.V11b "Southern Cross".



TAHS file photo of "Southern Cross".

1934 – Freda Thompson, the first woman in the Commonwealth, to gain her instructor's rating, became the first Australian woman to fly solo from England to Australia.

1945 – On 07 May, Germany surrendered unconditionally and RAAF units in Europe began to disband after flying almost 200,000 operational hours and suffering 8,798 casualties.

1959 – On 29 July, Qantas Empire Airways first Boeing 707 flight to San Francisco, left Sydney and on 05 September, a Boeing 707 named "City of Melbourne", flew the first jet service to London. The jet era had arrived.



TAHS File photo of Qantas Empire Airways Boeing 707.

1960 – On 16 July, Australia's first aircraft hijack occurred. A TAA Electra aircraft, was flying Sydney to Brisbane when a passenger threatened to blow up the aircraft unless it diverted to Singapore. He was subdued and the aircraft landed safely.

1969 – On 19 February, Ansett Airlines operated the first jet cargo service between Melbourne and Perth using a Boeing 727 VH-RMS.

1985 – In May, the first two F/A -18 Hornet aircraft ordered by the RAAF were delivered.



Photo FA 18 Hornet courtesy of RAAF

COMING EVENTS



Below are the dates for December, January and February's sausage sizzle at Bunnings King Meadows.

Sunday 17 December 2023.

Sunday 21 January 2024.

Sunday 18 February 2024.

This "sizzle" is fast becoming the most profitable event for TAHS, thus ensuring regular cash flow to support our society.

As usual Peter is always on the lookout for more volunteers to help cook and serve the growing number of customers so if you can help please contact Peter through the TAHS membership email address.

If not just pop up and say "hello". Keen to see and meet fellow members and lovers of aviation.



FESTIVE SEASON GREETINGS

FROM ALL AT TASMANIAN AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY



May you and your family have a very merry Christmas and enjoy a safe and happy 2024.



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