



Outlook

AHSA News

Vol. 38 No. 4 October 2022

The aircraft of the Royal Visits by Queen Elizabeth II



During her first visit to Australia, Queen Elizabeth II flew around the country aboard this specially-equipped Qantas Lockheed Constellation, VH-EAG.

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Outlook AHSA News is the quarterly newsletter of the Aviation Historical Society of Australia Inc.

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AHSA Meetings:

Melbourne meetings are held on the 4th Wednesday of each month, at the RAAF Association offices in Camberwell Road, Hawthorn. Meetings are also streamed online with Zoom.

Membership of the AHSA Inc. for the 2022 calendar year costs \$50 in Australia and \$85 for the rest of the world. A membership application form can be downloaded from our website: www.ahsa.org.au

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Aviation Historical Society of Australia Inc.

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What's Inside?

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| President's Comment | 2 |
| AHSA news | 3 |
| Feature: The aircraft of Queen Elizabeth II's royal visits | 5 |
| Coming Aviation Events | 10 |
| 100 Years Ago / 50 Years Ago In Australian Aviation | 11 |
| Civil Aviation Snippets | 11 |
| Military Aviation Snippets | 13 |
| Australian Industry News Snippets | 14 |
| Museum News | 14 |
| New Books on Australian Aviation History | 14 |
| Book Reviews | 15 |
| Research Corner | 15 |

President's Comment

A President's comment should be more than froth and bubble and so I have sharpened my quill for this newsletter.

Nationwide the COVID-19 bubble seems to be evaporating but there are still people catching and dying from the virus. Disappointing. Fortunately I am not aware of any AHSA members succumbing to the virus. Thank goodness.

On historical matters. Three things that stay in my mind long-term are the loss of Sir Charles Kingsford Smith, the display of the Fokker trimotor, the Southern Cross, VH-USU, and where are the remains of that 1848 Australian explorer, Ludwig Leichhardt.

Now the Southern Cross is at Brisbane airport, in a display building just off airport drive, the turn-off being just before the roundabout. Certainly the aircraft is in a display building but the catch is, it is hidden behind a row of trees.

The average citizen goes to the terminal with zero knowledge that the first aircraft to cross the Pacific still survives and in theory is on display.

As a nation we can do better!

I am of the view that like the Vickers Vimy at Adelaide, it should be repositioned such that it is better displayed for all to see and appreciate. Forget Charles Lindbergh! Kingsford Smith and his crew were the first to cross the Pacific in 1928! A greater distance than Lindbergh. We see Kingsford Smith turning up on \$20 notes and in other reminders of the man.

Certainly Lindbergh, like Kingsford Smith was a hero of the depression. Both nations needed heroes at that time. Australia had Kingsford Smith and America had Lindbergh. The American media machine was and still is overpowering. The average American believes that Lindbergh, in 1927, was the first to cross the Atlantic. But what about the 1919 Atlantic crossing in a Vickers Vimy by Alcock & Brown?

My thought is that with the aid of undersea drone survey vehicles the Government should invest time and taxpayers money in a survey of the sea around the Island of Aye in the Gulf

Coming AHSA Melbourne Meetings:

October 26 - Dr Peter Hobbins will describe some of his research into the RAAF's early embrace of flight simulation.

November 23 - Annual General Meeting, with a "Member's Night" following the formal proceedings.

December - (no monthly meeting on the 4th Wednesday) AHSA Barbecue will be held at Moorabbin Air Museum on Sunday 11 December from 10am to 2pm.

of Andaman, where Kingsford Smith was reported to have crashed on 8 November 1935 in the Lockheed Altair. Surely something is left? Remains, aero engine, fuselage parts? And of course the Government of Myanmar (previously Burma) would need to approve the survey expedition.

A potential hunt for the remains of Kingsford Smith brings me to another lost Australian explorer, being Ludwig Leichhardt. In April 1848, in the company of five white men, two Aboriginal guides, seven horses, 20 mules and 50 bullocks, he left the Darling Downs in southern Queensland bound for Western Australia's Swan River settlement. Shortly after, the entire party vanished with barely a trace.

Surely in this day and age of exploration it is possible for a (Government funded?) expedition to try and find the remains of Leichhardt and his party.

I view the disappearance of Kingsford Smith and Leichhardt as two of the great mysteries of Australian history that can be solved.

Another item that keeps popping up in my mind is that of archives, aircraft records and aircraft export.

For those with an ear to the ground we see a trickle of Australian aircraft, civil and military, being exported. Now correct me if you like but some 20 years ago if one wanted to export an aircraft one had to advertise it here first and if no sale then it could be sold and exported. It would appear that those rules have quietly been erased and now it is export what and when you like.

Archives. In years gone by it was possible to access the National Archives for aircraft data files. They were then held in paper form and could be sighted, and still are, but with some restrictions. In more recent times the regulator of the day, CASA, holds most of its records in digital form. I for one never recall CASA advising that it would rely almost solely on digital records. The question I ask is has CASA made provision for digital aircraft records to be accessible by aviation historians and other such people? Are they still to be available through viewing devices both now and in the future. Remember it was not long ago that we had 5" floppy discs. Then came 3.5" floppy discs. Then we had CDs and DVDs and now memory sticks (and by other names). What happened to Blackberrys? Now defunct!

The point I make is will today's technology and what is recorded still be around in the both the short and long term for us to use or will some new form of recoding technology come into being such that current records will not be accessible?

The subject of archives and access to them is one that I keep hearing about. Now a new issue. The Age newspaper of 16 September 2022 ran an article that stated that the National Library of Australia will have to suspend access to its collection for the next six months. It would appear that the NLA building is suffering structural damage and that in turn has resulted in damage to the parts of the NLA collection. The Labour government knew about the issue and then came along the Liberal Government. But nothing happened to improve the issue. The article commented on the damage being the result of decades of underfunding and a negligent attitude to cultural heritage on the part of many governments. Meanwhile there is a \$500 million extension to the Australian War Memorial. Most likely the question is: which one draws the most votes?

The article made the very correct comment 'that we cannot understand the history of Australia [including aviation history] without historical records'. So why have governments allowed this to happen? Votes, money allocation, pork barrelling, greater short term interest in cultural items such as art work?

One can only hope that government moves to fix the archives issue in the short term before records are lost forever.

David Prosser
President, AHSA Inc.

AHSA NEWS

New Patron Appointed - AIRCDRE John Meier



It is with great pleasure that we welcome Air Commodore John (JM) Stanley Meier as the new patron of the AHSA Inc. John brings not only a wealth of experience from his illustrious career with the RAAF but also his unique understanding of preserving and promoting aviation heritage as the inaugural Director, RAAF History and Heritage.

Air Commodore Meier grew up in Ipswich, QLD not far from RAAF Base Amberley prior to entering the RAAF in 1979 as a Ground Defence cadet at Officer Cadet School, Portsea. After graduating from Portsea he completed two years as a Ground Defence Officer with postings as a Flight Commander at No 1 Recruit Training Unit, RAAF Base Edinburgh and as Base Security Officer at RAAF Base Laverton. Following these postings, he transferred to the Navigator category and graduated from No 63 Navigator's Course in 1982.

Following his graduation, the then Flying Officer Meier was posted to No 292 Squadron for conversion training prior to flying the P-3B Orion with No 11 Squadron at RAAF Edinburgh. He progressed through the various sensor stations on the aircraft becoming a Tactical Coordination Officer on the P-3C aircraft. With his crew, he won the Marconi Trophy for No 11 Squadron in 1988 and then competed in international ASW competition, the Fincastle Trophy. During this period he also completed the Weapons Systems Course at RAAF East Sale. A highlight of his tour with No 11 Squadron was successfully completing search and rescue missions off both the east and west coasts of Australia.

He was promoted to Squadron Leader in 1991 and was posted to Headquarters Air Command as the P-3 Planner. At the end of this posting Air Commodore Meier moved to the ADF School of Languages to study French after which he attended the French Command and Staff Course at the Ecole Militaire in Paris. After graduation he was posted to the Weapons Requirements position in Aerospace Development where he worked on future air to air and air to surface weapons for the RAAF.

In August 1997, on promotion to Wing Commander, Air Commodore Meier joined Air Force Headquarters as Deputy Director Capability Review. After two years, he was posted to

Defence Intelligence Organisation as SO1 Special Operations Support during which he was closely involved in the preparation and deployment of Australian forces to Timor and ADF support to the 2000 Olympics.

Towards the end of 2000 he was promoted to Group Captain and appointed as the Defence Attaché at the Australian Embassy, Paris. During his Paris tenure, he had the great privilege to meet many Free French Air Force veterans and attend ANZAC Day ceremonies with his New Zealand peers on the Somme battlefields. He returned to Australia in 2004 to attend the Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies and after graduating he returned to Air Force Headquarters where he was appointed Director Combat Capability Management until the end of 2006. In January 2007 he moved to the Defence Intelligence Organisation as the Director Weapons Systems. In March 2008 he was posted to the Middle East as Chief of Staff, Joint Task Force 633 until September 2008. He was awarded a Commander Joint Task Force 633 Silver Commendation during this posting.

He was promoted to Air Commodore on 20 October 2008 and took up the appointment of Director General Joint Evaluation and Exercises (J7 and J8) at HQ Joint Operations Command, where he oversaw the Talisman Sabre series of exercises and established an operational analysis and lessons learnt capability. In August 2010 he was again posted to the Defence Intelligence Organisation as Director-General Weapons and Technical Intelligence. He was awarded the New Zealand Chief of Defence Force Commendation in 2013.

After a career spanning 34 years in the Permanent Air Force, he retired on 01 November 2013. He subsequently transferred to the RAAF Active Reserve and was appointed initially as an oral historian. His primary task was recording the recollections of RAAF members who deployed on operations from World War II until today. In March 2016, the Deputy Chief of Air Force appointed him as the inaugural Director-General History and Heritage – Air Force (DGHH-AF). His vision for this new Branch is to bring the story of the people and the endeavour of the Air Force to the wider RAAF and Australian community. In May 2022 he transitioned from this post and is now writing RAAF histories and works as an oral historian.

John is married to Anne and they have two adult children. Anne is a retired Public Servant. John has a Graduate Diploma in Applied Science, Diploma in Applied Languages (French), Bachelor of Professional Studies and a Masters in Strategic Studies. He is a keen hiker, amateur military historian and fly fisher.

In August 2021 he was appointed as Patron of the Airfield Defence Association.

We look forward to having AIRCDRE Meier as a Patron of the AHSA.

July Melbourne Meeting

We were thrilled to have a presentation by GPCAPT Macauley Cottrell (affectionately known as “Mac the FAC”) about his experiences flying Forward Air Control missions while on secondment to the United States Air Force from April to October 1968. Mac described the different types of FAC missions and his pathway from RAAF FAC training with the Air Support Unit, then with the RAF and British Army in Malaysia and also in Thailand.



He also participated in joint exercises with the Australian RAR regiments at Shoalwater Bay before leaving for Vietnam where he carried out “in-country” training with the 504th Tactical Indoctrination Squadron at Phan Rang in April 1968.

His assignment was with the 19th Tactical Air Support Squadron of the 3rd Brigade 1st US Infantry Division, based at Lai Khe and allocated the call-sign “Sidewinder 34”. The airstrip at Lai Khe regularly came under fire from rockets and mortars so all quarters and buildings were sand-bagged for protection.

During his assignment, Mac carried out 124 operational FAC missions, 163 reconnaissance missions and controlled a total of 217 air strikes.



Above: “Mac the FAC” in an O-1 Bird-Dog in 1968 (Macauley Cottrell)



Above: Mac Cottrell answers questions following his presentation.

August Melbourne Meeting

Another fascinating meeting was held on 24 August, with our guest presenter Richard de Crespigny providing insight into his experiences before, during and after the in-flight engine failure aboard Qantas flight QF32 on 4 November 2010.



Richard had two fascinating flying careers: 11 years as an officer and pilot in the Royal Australian Air Force, and 34 years flying B747, A330 and A380 aircraft in Qantas before his Qantas flying

was cut short by the COVID-19 pandemic, two years prior to his planned retirement.

Richard gave a fascinating talk, covering not only how his flying career and technical curiosity prepared him for the events of QF34, but also some details of his future plans.

Richard has written two books coming from his QF32 experience, the first book he describes as the “what and when” book (QF32, published 2012) and the second which he describes as the “how and why” book (Fly! The Elements of Resilience, published 2018). He explained that he is hoping to finish his third book in the near future, on the topic of flying “big jet” airliners. He had already commenced work on this book prior to the QF32 incident.

Richard’s talk was thoroughly absorbing and entertaining.

September Melbourne Meeting

The 28 September meeting was as always interesting. With some 40 members joining (present and on Zoom) we had a presentation by Group Captain Grant Kelly, Director, Historic Unrecovered War Casualties History & Heritage Branch – Air Force. GPCAPT Kelly spoke of the work that the Air Force does in relation to recovering war casualties.



While they do not seek out aircraft wrecks or recover aircraft wrecks the group takes a serious interest in wrecks that come to their notice and if the background warrants then to investigate the wreck if there is adequate information that might result in the recovery of human remains of Air Force members.

Once the remains are found and recovered then the case has to be put forward to another group for examination to give correct authority to say that the remains are that of certain crew members. In short not wanting to give families hope that their loved one has been recovered when in fact it might well be someone else.

GPCAPT Kelly spoke of the missing in North Korea, not being able to recover them while the current political situation remains as it is. He spoke of a small number of pilots from WW1 that have not been recovered. There was a slide presentation of the recent recovery of some items from a Catalina WWII wreck/crash in Indonesia. The tropics is hard on human remains and they can in fact dissolve with time and the environment and also after the crash happens animal scavengers can in effect part out human remains making hard work for GPCAPT’s team leaving only a dog tag ID disc to find on site. An AHSA member asked about trying to recover remains on the mainland. GPCAPT Kelly said that underwater wrecks on the coast line were a difficult exercise. President Dave Prossor spoke of Lake Victoria in N-W corner of Victoria possible holding several aircraft wrecks and also the Beaufighter A19-208 that the crew of SQNLDR. L.W. Wackett (son of Lawrence Wackett) and PO K.Noble that crashed in the NT on 24 September 1944 after it ran out of fuel at night after returning from a mission. The pair apparently successfully parachuted to safety. Over a year later it was found

that at least one of the pair made his way to the wreck of the Beaufighter but neither of the pair was ever found.

In more recent years the advent of DNA testing has assisted with identifying personnel remains. Comment was also made about the Commonwealth Archives. Some aircraft crashes were documented while others did not appear to be so, but later found in a second or third search or by others. One AHSA members made comment about the aspect of ID Tags, commonly called dog tags, and asked when they went from aluminium to stainless steel. It was not possible to answer that at the meeting. Stainless steel is less likely to corrode compared to alum ID tags. In the case of the Catalina one or more ID tags were found but no human remains.

It was an interesting meeting on an unusual subject.

(DP)

Welcome to our new members

We welcome the following new members who joined since the last quarterly newsletter:

Gary Gould (NSW)
Geoff Constantine (SA)
Andrew Sheppard (Victoria)
GPCAPT Grant Kelly (ACT)

Vale Eric Allen

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of long time AHSA member Eric Allen. Eric passed away on September 30 in Sydney, NSW, aged 82.

Eric joined the fledgling AHSA in 1960. He contributed to the journal and continued his membership through all these years.

He worked at the Commonwealth Bank from where he later retired. Eric was married to Hedy and they had one child, Adrian.

Eric contributed to the AHSA journal and to AHSA special publications. He was also in the front line to form the NSW Branch. He wrote a series of articles describing Australian airliners for Australian Aviation magazine. The most recent being the 3-part history of the DH.86 Express airliner.

His keen interest in civil aviation saw him write two volumes of Airliners in Australian Service, published in 1995 and 1996 by Stewart Wilson’s Aerospace Publications.

In his younger days, Eric’s presence at an airport or an air show was evidenced by his Toyota car, the registration being EEA-707. A nice play on words. He was a keen aircraft photographer and prided himself in using top-quality equipment.

Eric will be sorely missed.

Search for a Secretary:

The AHSA Inc. requires a Secretary in order to operate as a not-for-profit organisation. Our current Secretary (Mark Pilkington) has indicated that he plans to move on to other activities at the end of 2022, so the Committee are commencing an early search for a new Secretary for the AHSA. If you have skills in organisation and are keen to contribute to the future of the AHSA, please contact the President (David Prossor) by email: President@AHSA.org.au.

Note that our monthly committee meetings are held via Zoom, so you don’t need to be Melbourne-based to consider this position.

The Aircraft of Queen Elizabeth II’s Royal Visits to Australia

Queen Elizabeth II was the first reigning monarch of Australia to set foot on Australian soil, coming ashore at Farm Cove, Sydney, on 3 February 1954 from the Royal Yacht SS Gothic. During her numerous visits to Australia she and Prince Phillip adopted air travel to quickly cover the large distances across our continent.

To mark the passing of Queen Elizabeth II on 8 September 2022, this short article looks at the wide range of aircraft she utilised during her Australian visits.

During that first visit to Australia in 1954 the royal couple flew approximately 10,000 miles by air, making approximately 33 flights, on four different aircraft. In addition to the four main aircraft, each was followed by a back-up aircraft in case of a maintenance issue.

The RAAF provided Dakota A65-123 (with A65-90 as backup and A65-112 and 118 providing logistics support), Australian National Airways provided Douglas C-54/DC-4 Skymaster VH-INY (VH-ANG as back-up), Trans-Australia Airlines provided Convair 240 VH-TAQ (VH-TAR as backup), and Qantas Empire Airways provided the Lockheed L749 Constellation VH-EAF (plus a backup aircraft, registration unknown).



Above: RAAF Dakota A65-123 (via D Anderson 724111715N)



Above: The Royal Couple disembarking from A65-123 (via D. Anderson 720022157N)



Above: The backup Dakota, A65-90 along with an RAAF VIP crew (via D. Anderson 710011971N)



Above: The Queen inspects a naval honour guard after arriving at Essendon aboard Australian National Airlines Douglas DC-4 Skymaster VH-INY "Laxapana" (Barrie Colledge)



Above: The Royal Couple board VH-INY (via Peter Kelly)



Above: The two ANA C-54/DC-4 Royal Tour aircraft, VH-INY starting its engines in the foreground and backup aircraft VH-ANG in the background (via Peter Kelly)



Above: A closer view of ANA C-54 Skymaster VH-INY before starting its engines. The ANA logo and name "Laxapana" under the cockpit window have been replaced by the royal crest (via Peter Kelly)



Above: Qantas Lockheed L749 Constellation VH-EAF taxis out at Townsville in 1954.

Something of the organisation required by the civil operators, and the atmosphere of the Royal Tour, was conveyed by Jim Cowan in an interview he gave to Greg Banfield some years ago:

"Qantas provided the Constellation VH-EAF to carry the Queen from Melbourne to Brisbane, from Brisbane to Townsville, and from Brisbane to Broken Hill, then on to Adelaide, Kalgoorlie and Perth. I was among the crew of VH-EAF, with Don MacMaster in command. 'Torchy' Uren flew the support aircraft. There were always two aircraft on such tours because of the possibility of unserviceability."

"Such precautions are not so necessary with today's more reliable aircraft, but in those days the back-up aircraft followed the primary aircraft by half an hour to an hour. 'Torchy' followed us all the way round the tour and finally, when we got to Kalgoorlie, somebody must have taken pity on him and had a word to the Queen, as his crew was presented to the Royal couple then. It was the last opportunity they had, because if we took off successfully from Kalgoorlie for Perth, 'Torchy's' job was done and he was to return to Sydney. Perth happened to be in the middle of an infantile paralysis scare when we arrived, so the Queen was not allowed to come in contact with anybody. Everybody who met her on this arrival had to stand off at a distance and graciously bow, but there was no contact by hand with anybody except her Qantas crew. We had come with her and she shook us all by the hand, to the envy of the Perth crowd."



Above: Trans-Australia Airlines Convair 240 VH-TAQ "John Forest" wearing the royal livery for the 1954 royal visit (via Peter Kelly)

Below: A cut-away view showing the modified interior layout of VH-TAQ for the Royal Tour (via Peter Kelly)



Above: The Queen and Prince Phillip board Convair 240 VH-TAQ. The backup aircraft VH-TAR sits in the background. (via Peter Kelly)



Above: The Queen and Prince Phillip after disembarking from VH-TAQ via the rear stairs (via Peter Kelly)



Above: The TAA crews for VH-TAQ and VH-TAR during the Queen's 1954 tour (via Peter Kelly)

The Queen returned to Australia in 1963, flying into RAAF Fairbairn from Christchurch, New Zealand to celebrate Canberra's Jubilee. She and Prince Phillip flew on Qantas Boeing 707 VH-EBE, which became the first jet passenger aircraft to land at Christchurch.

The Royal yacht Britannia had been sent on ahead to be used as her base as she then made numerous stops around the nation.



Above: The Queen and Prince Phillip arrived at Wynyard, Tasmania aboard TAA Convair 240 VH-TAQ in February 1954 (The Collection p1178-0275-SPEC)



Above: The Queen arrives at RAAF Fairbairn, Canberra aboard Qantas Boeing 707 VH-EBE at the commencement of her 1963 tour (from The Queen and the RAAF, AWM F10467--1-)



Above: A wider view of the Queen's arrival at RAAF Fairbairn in February 1963 aboard Qantas Boeing 707 VH-EBE. Her majesty can be seen about to step off the air-stairs. The photo was taken by Arthur Lindeman who was the Department of Civil Aviation Airport Manager at Canberra airport from 1962 to 1978. During this time he took many photographs of aircraft and the airport. Included in these photographs are a number of photos of royal visits by Queen Elizabeth II and other members of the royal family. (Arthur Lindeman via Peter Lindeman)



Above: Arriving at Alice Springs in 1963 aboard RAAF Consolidated Convair A96-353 (from The Queen and the RAAF, AWM F10467--1-)



Above: During the 1963 visit, the royal Rolls Royce being loaded aboard RAAF Lockheed Hercules C-130A A97-214. (from The Queen and the RAAF, AWM F10467--1-)

For the flight from Darwin to Kununurra on 17 March 1963 the Royal Couple flew aboard the RAAF Convair CV-440 Metropolitan A96-353 of No 34 Squadron.

Below: 17 March 1963 - The Royal Tour party, including Her Royal Highness, Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, Sir David Brand, Premier of Western Australia, and Mrs Brand walk across the "tarmac" at the Kununurra (KNX) airstrip towards their aircraft A96-353 (wingtip just visible at the left). Behind the Royal party is the backup aircraft, Metropolitan A96-313. (Kununurra Historical Society KHS-2013-11-PD, Peter Davies Collection)





Above: RAAF Convair CV-440 Metropolitan A96-353 taxiing across the red dirt at Kununurra airstrip. (Kununurra Historical Society KHS-2013-11-c-PD, Peter Davies Collection)



Above: The Royal couple boarding Convair Metropolitan A96-353 at Canberra (Arthur Lindeman via Peter Lindeman)



Above: The RAAF backup aircraft, Convair CV-440 Metropolitan A96-313 at Essendon airport. A smart 1956 Ford V8 Customline graces the tarmac in front of the camera. (CAHS-Durrell collection)

At the conclusion of her 1968 visit, the Queen departed from Adelaide heading for Auckland on Air New Zealand DC-8 ZK-NZE.



Above: The Royal couple wave farewell to Adelaide at the end of their 1968 tour (Mal Lloyd)



Above: Air New Zealand Douglas DC-8 ZK-NZE at Adelaide in 1968 (Mal Lloyd)



Above: Air New Zealand Douglas DC-8 ZK-NZE departs Adelaide bound for Auckland in 1968 (Mal Lloyd)

For her visits in 1970, 1973, 1974 and 1977 the Queen flew to Australia aboard Qantas 707s.

The Queen, Prince Philip, Charles, Prince of Wales (for part of the tour only) and Princess Anne made an extensive tour of Australia in 1970 in connection with the bi-centenary of Captain James Cook's voyage up the east coast of Australia in 1770.

After several days of engagements in the city of Brisbane, Queen Elizabeth II and The Duke of Edinburgh commenced their regional tour flying to Longreach on Wednesday 15 April. The primary purpose for their stopover in Longreach was to visit the first operational base of Queensland's first airline which became Australia's Overseas Airline. During the visit they viewed an exhibition of Qantas memorabilia, including a replica of the company's first aircraft, the Avro 504K of 1921. The occasion marked the 50th anniversary of the founding of The Queensland and Northern Territory Aerial Services, Limited (Qantas).

The tour continued from Mount Isa and the Royal Family travelled to Mackay, Townsville, the Great Barrier Reef, Cooktown and Cairns. The visit to Mackay in the evening followed a late afternoon flight from Mount Isa on the 16 April.

The 1973 visit was mainly for her to open the Sydney Opera House.

The 1974 visit utilised the Royal yacht Britannia, RAAF aircraft and Qantas aircraft, and it included Papua New Guinea, Norfolk Island and Australia. The Queen and Duke had Princess Anne and Mark Phillips as well as Lord Mountbatten with them, but a UK general election was called so the Queen had to return to London, leaving Prince Phillip to complete the official duties.



Above: The Queen and Prince Phillip disembark from Qantas 707 VH-EAB at Canberra, followed by Princess Anne and Captain Phillips. (Arthur Lindeman via Peter Lindeman)

The March 1977 tour as part of the Silver Jubilee of Her Majesty's reign was also a combination of Qantas, RAAF and Britannia.

In 1980, it was a quick four-day visit and Prince Phillip flew in on QF4 while the Queen arrived on an RAAF 707.

In 1981 she arrived on an RAAF 707 and Britannia was awaiting her in Melbourne.

In 1982 her arrival and departure for the Brisbane Commonwealth Games was by RAAF 707 then she met up with the Duke and Britannia.

Her visit in 1986 was slightly different in that she arrived in Canberra on an Air New Zealand Boeing 727, joined Britannia and left on an RAAF 707 to return to London. In 1988, for the Bicentenary, it was the by now familiar RAAF 707 arrival.

In 1992 the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh flew London to Sydney on a chartered Qantas Boeing 747-400.

In 2000 the Queen arrived on a Qantas chartered aircraft designated QF6060, visited the Sydney Olympic village around many other appearances and flew out of Perth on QF9.

In 2002 to mark her Golden Jubilee the Queen and Duke arrived in Adelaide and flew out of Brisbane on a chartered Boeing 777 aircraft.

In 2006, the Royal couple again arrived and departed on a chartered British Airways Boeing 777-200ER aircraft, G-YMMO. On 12 March 2006, the Monarch flew to Canberra and Melbourne to celebrate the Commonwealth Games. The aircraft made a stopover in Singapore on the out-bound flight. Five days later, on 17 March, the same aircraft took the Queen back to London.

The Queen's last visit to Australia was in October 2011 and again she and the Duke arrived and departed on a chartered British Airways Boeing 777-200ER, this time G-YYMP. The trip itself was also a milestone for the airline, which for the first time made the direct flight between London and Perth.

(DB) Sources: Kunnunurra Museum; Australian War Memorial; Airport Spotting website; Zimbio website; John Scott AHSA (NSW) Loops & Landings

If you have any additional photos of Royal Visit aircraft, send them to the Editor or post them on the AHSA Facebook group.

COMING AVIATION EVENTS

2022

- 29 October Whyalla Wings Airport Open Day, SA
- 5 November Benalla Airshow, Vic
www.benallaairshow.com.au
- 12-13 November Wings Over Illawarra, NSW
www.wingsoverillawarra.com.au
- 12-13 November Bendigo National Swap Meet, Vic
www.bendigowswap.com.au
- 4 December Ballarat Air Show, Vic

2023

- 3-5 March Australian International Airshow, Avalon, VIC
www.airshow.com.au
- 25-26 March Hunter Valley Airshow, NSW
www.huntervalleyairshow.com.au
- 1 April Temora Showcase #1
- 6 May Temora Showcase #2
- 18 August Surfers Paradise Airshow, Queensland
- 16 Sept Temora Showcase #3
- 21 Oct Temora Showcase #4

With all events, please check before you make bookings or travel arrangements to ensure the event is still on. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in numerous event cancellations and postponements even at short notice.



100 YEARS AGO IN AUSTRALIAN AVIATION HISTORY

Frank Hurley Expedition to West Papua and Mandated Territory of New Guinea

On 4 October 1922 two aircraft, Curtiss Seagull G-AUCV and Short Shrimp G-AUPZ Fleetwings, departed from Port Moresby harbour at the start of an expedition to explore the Fly River area. The expedition was organised by the well known photographer Frank Hurley using two aircraft he purchased from Lebbeus Hordern.



Above: The Short Shrimp G-AUPZ (c/n S.540) being unloaded for service in New Guinea (Frank Walters collection via Aeropedia)

The Curtiss Seagull was flown by Captain Andrew Lang, an ex-fighter pilot from the Australian Flying Corps (AFC), Frederick Laidler being the engineer. It operated from Port Moresby harbour, completing trials on 4 September. With Frank Hurley on board, it was flown to Kaimari on the delta of the Purari River, a flight of some 402 km (250 miles) in heavy rain. Hurley reported that:

"This was difficult, risky flying; no aeroplane had ever before ridden these skies; there were no safe landing places for the finely-made mahogany hull would have been quickly gutted by the floating debris common along the coastline; there was no radio contact with shore base and little chance of assistance in an emergency; weather and atmospheric conditions were uncharted.... Over the vast Fly Delta the little flying-boat was menaced by black rain squalls and towering banks of dark,



lightning-slashed cloud."

Not G-AUCV, but a Curtiss Seagull nonetheless. This example on display at the Canadian Aviation and Space Museum in Ottawa (Derek Buckmaster)

At one point the Seagull dropped from an altitude of 1500 ft to 300 ft in seconds and then was swept so violently aloft by the rush of the air currents that only Lang's great skill saved them from disaster. However, the constant rain and humidity to which the aircraft had been subjected took its toll on the fabric

covering of the wings, and the machine became un-airworthy; repairs in such a remote place were out of the question and the plans to fly the aircraft across the island were shelved.

The Seagull was then flown to Thursday Island and later returned to Sydney.

Sources: Parnell, N. and Boughton, T., *Flypast, A Record of Aviation in Australia*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1988; <https://aeropedia.com.au/content/curtiss-seagull/>

50 YEARS AGO IN AUSTRALIAN AVIATION HISTORY

Clive Canning Flies Around Australia in His Homebuilt Thorp T.18

On 18 October 1972 Clive Canning commenced an around-Australia flight in this Thorp T.18 VH-CMC in an attempt to establish international records, returning to Melbourne on 26 October. His attempt was successful, the FAI ratified the record as Class C1B Group 1, Melbourne-Melbourne, 55.379 km/h, 11 081.274 km, 200 hrs 55 mins.

Sources: Parnell, N. and Boughton, T., *Flypast, A Record of Aviation in Australia*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1988, p.346



Above: Thorp T.18 VH-CMC at Mangalore airshow 1983 (David Tanner via Danny Tanner)

CIVIL AVIATION SNIPPETS

Benalla Airshow Celebrates 70 Years of Gliding at Benalla

The Benalla Airshow, planned for 5 November 2022 will be hosted by the Gliding Club of Victoria to celebrate their 70 years in Benalla. GCV have been operating at Benalla Airport continuously since 1952. The event will be delivered by Paul Bennet Airshows at the former RAAF airfield. One of many training bases established in southern Australia to support the RAAF's commitment to the Empire Air Training Scheme, Benalla was home to No 11 Elementary Flying School between 1941 and 1945.

The airshow will be run in conjunction with the Benalla Festival, a celebration of the Benalla Rural City's lifestyle, its community, country living and community spirit. Tickets and details can be found online at www.benallaairshow.com.au

Rex Celebrates 20 Years

A story from The *Daily Advertiser* newspaper in Wagga tells of the celebration:

Exactly two decades ago, Regional Express Airlines rose from the ashes of Ansett Australia and took flight for the very first time - soaring into the air from Wagga Airport.

Born amidst financial chaos and fears regional Australia could be left without a dedicated airline, the business has defied expectations and survived, boasting record passenger numbers as it celebrated its 20th anniversary on Tuesday.



Above: **BIRTHDAY:** Wagga mayor Dallas Tout, former Riverina MP Kay Hull, Rex deputy chairman John Sharp, Member for Wagga Dr Joe McGirr and Rex general manager Warrick Lodge celebrated the airline's 20th anniversary. Picture: Madeline Begley

Returning to where it all began, deputy chairman John Sharp described the milestone as a great achievement in the airline's history.

"It's a very symbolic moment for us because it's been a very long and difficult battle to keep the airline operating," he said.

"Not only have we survived, but we've grown dramatically over that 20 year period."

Wagga has served as a vital hub for Rex since its inception and currently houses the airline's maintenance facility and pilot training centre.

Former Riverina MP Kay Hull played a central role in the formation of Rex following the financial collapse of Ansett and remembers dark days where it appeared the region could be left cut off from the aviation network.

"I was faced with having no services in or out of the Riverina ... and there were many times where it was just so dubious whether we could fly another flight," she said.

"It was an enormous task but eventually we convinced the government to support the airline to move into the sky ... and to reach 20 years is honestly so impressive."



Above: **ACHIEVEMENT:** Rex ambassador Kay Hull said it was an "enormous task" to get Rex into the air in 2002. Picture: Madeline Begley

Mrs Hull has served as an ambassador for Rex ever since and credits the airline's commitment to regional Australia for the massive growth that has been seen in cities like Wagga over the past few years.

"People don't realise how much a regional airline delivers into the community," she said. "We have prospered as a result of Regional Express having a commitment to the country which they have lived and thrived by."

This sentiment was shared by Wagga mayor Dallas Tout, who said the airline would have a key role to play in the continued growth of the region.

"The consistency of the service to the Wagga market is something we're very thankful for and we look forward to celebrating another 20 year relationship with Rex in the long-term," Cr Tout said.

"The more population and infrastructure we get, the more flights we need so Rex is absolutely critical for Wagga's growth"

Source: *The Daily Advertiser*, 2 August 2022, by Monty Jacka.

Jet Warbird Action

The US National Championship Air races & Air Show is held each year at Reno, Nevada, USA.

The air races this year had an unfortunate fatality when an L29 jet trainer flew into the ground during the Sunday 18 September jet races.

News of that crash overshadowed the mid-air collision of Charlie Camilleri of Bathurst, NSW. Charlie was flying L29 'Miss Independence' race # 61, VH-XET, in the jet race when it was overtaken by another L29 on its right side during an anti clockwise race pattern turn at very low level. The other L29, (pilot and aircraft unknown) clipped the starboard wing of VH-XET and the outer metre or so was knocked off the wing. This all happened at very high speed.

VH-XET kept flying and Charlie managed to maintain control of the L29 and land safely. Charlie Camilleri has been a regular Reno Air races pilot for several years. (DP)

Warbirds Downunder Cancelled Due To Sodden Facilities

The current La Niña climate event (warm water moving westwards in the Pacific Ocean) has caused high rainfall which has led to the cancellation of Warbirds Downunder Airshow. An announcement from the Temora Aviation Museum (TAM) explained the decision.

The Chief Executive Officer of the TAM, Murray Kear, has reported that the biennial Warbirds Downunder Airshow that was to be held on 15th and 16th October this year has had to be cancelled.

"The decision to cancel the event has not been taken lightly", Mr Kear said, "however the unprecedented weather cycles have waterlogged the entire event site including car parking, aircraft parking, caravan parking, and the tent city 'glamping' sites, and has prevented them from being utilised as intended".

Mr Kear went on to say "Temora has received 101.8mm of rain in September to date, and with more heavy falls forecast prior to October 15th, and because the event site is predominantly grassed areas without any infrastructure or roads, we are unable to stage the event. Temora has received already this year 745.8mm to September, with another 4 months to go to the end of the year, the town is trending to double its annual expected rainfall. We have cancelled the show because the potential for spectators, campers, vendors, and all attendees to be placed in an unsafe situation is far too high, and it would not be appropriate or safe to invite our visitors onto the site", Mr Kear explained.

All ticket holders will have the price of their tickets refunded.

Mr Kear said, "We know how disappointing this is for all our intended visitors, as it is for our TAM team who have worked so hard for the last two years organising the event. We will now regroup and announce when we can next stage this event. We know this is very disappointing news, and we thank you for your understanding and patience".

Source: *Temora Aviation Museum*

RAAF Ipswich Amberley Tattoo Cancelled Due to Sodden Facilities

Another victim of the current La Niña climate event, the RAAF Ipswich Amberley Air Tattoo planned for 29-30 October has been called off due to the wet condition of public access and car parking areas. The RAAF Facebook page explained: "We are

disappointed to announce the Ipswich Amberley Air Tattoo scheduled for this weekend has been cancelled due to recent heavy rainfalls in South East Queensland."

"We understand people will be disappointed, we are too, but safety is paramount to us. Unfortunately, the grassed areas for car parking at RAAF Base Amberley and the viewing hubs in Ipswich are waterlogged. The conditions at these sites are not safe for parking or spectator attendance."

"Even if it doesn't rain in the coming days and we have sunny conditions, the grassed areas will not dry out in time for the Air Tattoo. All Ipswich Amberley Air Tattoo ticket holders will have their tickets refunded in full. Please note that refunds will occur automatically by the Civic Centre Box office. Due to the large volume of transactions that are required to be processed, this may take up to 30 days."

On a happier note, the RAAF History and Heritage Group are continuing with their Amberley Heritage Centre events for Vietnam Veterans (for ticket-holders only).

CASA Issues First New Style Aircraft Registrations

With available aircraft registrations running out CASA has issued the first of the new style alpha-numeric registrations. The first release of 1500 new marks was made available on Friday 23 September 2022.



Above: An example of what to expect for the new alpha-numeric registration marks (CASA)

The very first went to an Exec 90 amateur built helicopter as VH-X90 on 11 October. The registered owner is The Iconic Helicopter Company P/L, Wetherill Park, NSW.

The second went to a Eurocopter MBB-BK117 C-2 as VH-8RP on 13 October. The owner is listed as Ricpau Investments Greenhills, NSW.

CASA have explained that initially, the new marks will only start with an X or 8, for example VH-8AB, VH-X9B, VH-X22. Marks will not contain the numbers '0' or '1' to avoid conflict with these numbers and the letters 'O' and 'I'. They also must contain a mix of alphanumeric characters - they cannot contain only numbers.

The full complement of marks will be made available when CASA's digital systems are more developed and able to manage large numbers of alphanumeric marks.

Expect to see more in the future.

(DP)

MILITARY AVIATION SNIPPETS

WAAAF Veteran Jessie Strike-McClelland Celebrates 100th Birthday

World War 2 Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF) veteran, Jessie Strike-McClelland, celebrated her 100th birthday on September 23.

She marked the occasion amongst family, friends and Australian service personnel Flight Lieutenant Justin Kelly and Chief Petty

Officer Jockel in her San Clemente villa retirement home in California.



Above: Jessie Strike-McClelland and Flight Lieutenant Justin Kelly with her 100th Birthday gift from the Australian Embassy at San Clemente Villas by the Sea, California. (Department of Defence)

Jessie was the youngest of seven children born to a father who worked for the Maritime Services Board and a mother who cared for their large family.

Jessie left school at age 14 to work as an office clerk and attended night school to learn shorthand and typing.

After completing the program, she joined the WAAAF to serve her country during WW2 and was assigned to the Intelligence Signals Unit under US General MacArthur who was stationed in Brisbane as head of operations for the Southwest Pacific area.

Jessie would teletype at great speed decoded signals that were then rushed upstairs to General MacArthur's war room.

After the war, Jessie went to Guam where she ran an import/export business that catered to US Navy and Air Force personnel still living on the island.

At the urging of military friends, she moved to the United States; originally to Southern California and then to Austin, Texas, where she was offered a job as a costume designer for a television production company.

Upon retirement from the company, she returned to California and settled in Orange County then later at the San Clemente Villas where she has lived for the past 20 years.

Jessie continued her dedicated service to the military during the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, where she corresponded back and forth with General Petraeus and Chaplain John Jacobs.

Through those relationships, she was able to send care packages to members of the military. This included her handmade, intricate greeting cards for them to send home, knitted caps to wear under their helmets and cooling neck bands.

She also secured large quantities of donated fabric for Iraqi women and knitted caps for wounded children in Afghanistan hospitals.

In addition to her support for the war efforts, Jessie obtained donated baby clothing from various thrift stores, laundered the items and sent them to Moms for Marines, as well as sewing dozens of quilts each year for the newborns at Camp Pendleton.

Jessie still exercises daily, eats a healthy diet and enjoys an active social life with those lucky enough to have her for a friend.

Flight Lieutenant Kelly said "It was such a privilege to celebrate Jessie's 100th and hear about her efforts during and post war. Jessie is still an inspiration to this day and provides significant contributions to the US military community."

Source: By Leading Aircraftwoman Cath Kelly, Defence Department

Australia's First Triton Rolled Out

Australia's first MQ-4C Triton remotely piloted aircraft system was rolled out in September as part of a partnership between the Department of Defence, US Navy and Northrop Grumman.



Above: Australia's first MQ-4C Triton aircraft poses for its first official portraits after emerging from the Northrop Grumman Palmdale paint booth. Photo: Alan Radecki, Northrop Grumman Aeronautics Media Services

Head Air Force Capability, Air Vice-Marshal Robert Denney, said the partnership will allow for not only intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance roles but it will support a broad range of joint effects and fully integrate into Air Force's combat architecture.

"This partnership is pushing the boundaries of Air Power to pursue a truly advanced platform that will provide both a foundational capability and a growth path for future decades," Air Vice-Marshal Denney said.

"Once in service, the remotely piloted High Altitude Long Endurance aerial system will significantly enhance our ability to persistently patrol Australia's north and north-western approaches, in the south-west Pacific and south to Antarctica.

"Triton will complement the surveillance role of the P-8A Poseidon by providing sustained operations at long ranges, and undertaking a range of intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance tasks.

"I look forward to exploring the ways in which Triton will enhance our Defence capabilities in the future."

Head Aerospace Systems Division, Air Vice-Marshal Leon Phillips, commended Defence's effective partnership with the United States Navy through the Triton Cooperative Program and with the manufacturer of the Triton, Northrop Grumman.

"This project is an excellent example of the successful partnership between our two nations and reflects the collaborative work between Defence and defence industry in delivering this strategic capability," Air Vice-Marshal Phillips said.

"Defence will invest more than \$900 million in Australian industry, including sustainment, ICT and facilities."

Defence expects the first of up to seven Australian MQ-4C Triton aircraft, including the relevant ground and support systems, to be completed and delivered to Australia in 2024.

Source: Air Force News, Defence Department

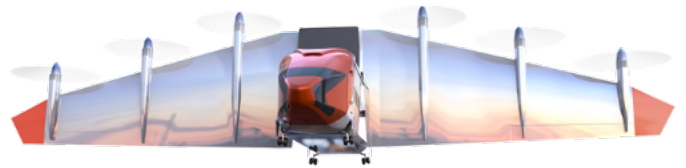
INDUSTRY NEWS SNIPPETS

Ricketts Point Aerospace Announces New VTOL Fire Bomber

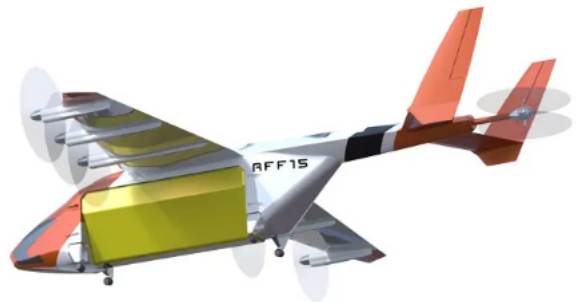
New Melbourne start-up Ricketts Point Aerospace has announced the planned development of a new VTOL tilt-wing fire bomber, the RFF15.



Key features of the multi-role aircraft include being purpose-designed for Fire Attack, a 4 hour mission duration, transit speed of 300 knots, enhanced crashworthiness and advanced avionics and imaging systems.



The aircraft features a modular mission panner, and fully tilting wing, similar to the Canadair General Dynamics CL-84 from the 1960s but with new technologies of Distributed Electric Propulsion (DEP) and Digital Flight Control (DFCS) to overcome the complexity in these earlier tilt wing designs.



Twin vertical tail rotors provide stability in the hovering and transition modes.

Source (text and images): <https://rpa.aero>

Stralis Aero Announces Electric Conversions

Brisbane start-up Stralis Aircraft Pty. Ltd. Have announced several new products, the first being the conversion of an existing aircraft to electric power.

Stralis was founded in 2021 to "decarbonise air travel, improve passenger experience and create a world class aircraft manufacturer in Australia". They see green hydrogen as a fundamentally clean solution that is carbon-free, lightweight and economic. Based on their practical experience with the alternatives, Stralis is convinced that hydrogen electric propulsion is the most commercially viable, truly sustainable solution. Due to the urgent need to decarbonise transport (IPCC), their first product is planned to be an existing aircraft, retrofitted with a novel hydrogen electric propulsion system allowing them to "accelerate the transition to sustainable flight".



B1900D-HE Retrofit Product

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Available seats: | 15 |
| Max payload: | 1,500 kg (3,300 lb) |
| Range (max payload): | 800 km (432 nm) + 45min IFR |
| Max cruise speed: | 500 km/h (270 kts) at 24,000 ft |
| Power plant: | 2 x 955 kW at 1700 rpm |
| Entry into service: | 2026 |

Their first product to market will be a modified a Beechcraft 1900D with the conventional turbine engines and kerosene fuel system replaced by a novel Hydrogen Electric Propulsion System (HEPS) and liquid hydrogen storage tank. During the modification, Stralis will inspect and overhaul the airframes and avionics, as well as modernise the interiors. Stralis intends to obtain a Supplemental Type Certificate (STC) for this product with CASA and the FAA.

The Stralis team bring a lot of experience in the electric conversion field. Co-Founder and CEO Bob Criner has 17 years of international aerospace experience, working on the cutting edge of electric aircraft innovation for the past 5 years. Most recently, he supported Heart Aerospace and Ampaire with their electric propulsion system engineering development. He was an early member of the magniX team, helping define company strategy, product roadmap, certification and was the Head of Aircraft Integration. Earlier in his career, Bob worked at Makani (GoogleX) and held lead positions on Saab, Airbus, UTC, Gulfstream, Northrop Grumman and Boeing aircraft programs. Bob studied aerospace engineering at UNSW.

Co-Founder and CTO Stuart Johnstone worked as a propulsion engineer at Ampaire where he developed the integrated system model and Hardware-in-the-Loop simulation. Before this Stuart was the electric motor design team lead at magniX, utilising his expertise in electromagnetic and thermal modelling. Earlier in his career, Stuart worked in cryogenics and superconductivity. Stuart studied Physics at the University of Glasgow.

Source: www.stralis.aero

MUSEUM NEWS

Tiger Moth VH-CXY returns to the skies of Temora

The engineers at Temora Aviation Museum have been working behind the scenes to return de Havilland DH.82 Tiger Moth VH-CXY / A17-668 to airworthy condition. CXY was kindly donated to the museum in 2019 by the Reed family (including Gus Reed and the late Alan Reed, former RAAF Air Vice-Marshal).

CXY returned to the skies in mid-August in the hands of THFC pilot Scott Taberner, 8 years after its last flight.



Source: Temora Aviation Museum

RAAF Amberley Heritage Centre Work on Avro Anson Restoration Continues

An update on the Avro Anson restoration work was provided recently by RAAF History and Heritage.

The team of reservists and volunteers in our Restoration Support Section (RSS) are currently restoring a historic Avro Anson prior to putting it on display at RAAF Base Amberley Aviation Heritage Centre.

Work began on restoring Anson W2472 in February 2017, starting with stripping the aircraft back to its bare frame.

"Although we were significantly hindered by COVID-19 restrictions, 2020 was a year of major progress for us," said WOFF Darren Whitford, Warrant Officer in Charge, RSS. "The team fitted the wing spars, engine nacelles, engines and undercarriage, allowing W2472 to stand alone for the first time in many years."

RSS has since also fitted the nose section, along with a mock Vickers machine gun on the pilot's side, and is now working to complete the cockpit fit out, radio operator station, navigator station and upper gun turret.

The restoration of Anson W2472 – which will be rebadged as AW655 from 71SQN – is expected to be completed in 2023.



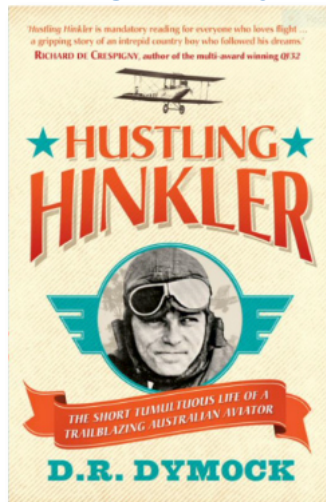
Above: Restoration work is in progress on Anson W2472. (RAAF History and Heritage)

Source: RAAF History and Heritage

NEW AUSTRALIAN AVIATION HISTORY BOOKS

Included below are several notable new releases covering Australian aviation history.

Hustling Hinkler by Dr Darryl R. Dymock



Part adventure, part mystery and part tragedy, HUSTLING HINKLER is the unforgettable true story of Bert Hinkler's astonishing life.

Herbert John Louis Hinkler was a working-class lad, born in Bundaberg, Queensland, in 1892. He became a decorated air gunner in World War I, before achieving his pilot's wings in the RAF. Combining formidable flying skills with a genius for invention, he became famous for his death-defying aviation triumphs. In 1928 he thrilled the world with the first solo flight from England to Australia, and another across

the South Atlantic in 1931.

Yet behind this publicly feted hero was a complex person who had a mixed-up romantic life and struggled to find his place in the world when not in the sky. He desperately clung to his dreams, despite the odds against him. Tragically, Bert's pioneering attempts came to an abrupt end on 7 January 1933, while attempting another solo flight from England to Australia. He left behind three grieving women and a remarkable picture of a man with a single-minded passion for flying.

This is not a book review as such but a comment on the research that was done to gather material for this publication.

A brief read of the book covers the life and times of Bert Hinkler, famed aviator, and long distance flyer. He is commemorated in

the Hinkler Hall of Aviation at Bundaberg, a worthwhile place to visit for a study of Hinkler, in the town of his birth.

The book, published by AHSA (Qld) member Dr Darryl Dymock is an interesting exercise in the amount of research required to put together such a publication. Now there have been a number of books before this one on Hinkler but the depth of research and the references noted are very interesting. There are chapters covering Notes and Sources, Records and Awards, Bibliography, Acknowledgements and an Index.

The references and sources in this publication are a good example of the depth quality and extended research required in order to get a publication like this on to bookshelves. And the AHSA supports and enables this depth of research, making the results available through its quarterly journal, Aviation Heritage, more copies of which are being added online for members to view.

Hustling Hinkler: The short tumultuous life of a trailblazing aviator ISBN: 9780733629839 (print) 9780733629983 (e-book) Published by Hachette Australia. 2013.

338 pages c/w 22 B&W photographs. The price on the back of the softback cover is \$14.99. Australia Post sale price \$9.95.

(DP)

BOOK REVIEW

If you have read a good book about Australian aviation history, please send us a review and let others know what you thought!

RAAF Black Cats by Robert Cleworth and John Suter Linton



To give this book's full title RAAF Black Cats: The Secret History of the Covert Catalina Mine-Laying Operations to Cripple Japan's War Machine is to clearly describe its contents and the intent of the authors.

In March 1945 Reg Cleworth, a navigator on PBY Catalina seaplanes flying out of Darwin, went missing in action. No details were ever given about the incident that took his life, nor the reason his plane went down. For Reg's younger brother, Robert, the news came as a prophecy fulfilled. The last time they saw each other, Reg

confided in Robert, "I don't think I'm coming back." Forty years later Robert decided to investigate what happened to his brother. What he uncovered was an extraordinary story of a covert Australian airborne mine-laying operation in cooperation with the U.S. Seventh Fleet to disrupt Japanese supply routes by trapping ships in their ports.

This was one of the riskier and more dangerous RAAF undertakings of the Pacific War, due nature of the attacks, requiring low-level approaches and mine-laying runs, to ensure precision placement of the mines. Thus secrecy restrictions were imposed on everyone involved, and these restrictions were never formally lifted. Had it not been for a chance meeting that allowed Robert access to previously unopened files in the U.S. national archives, this remarkable story may never have been told.

What he unearthed revealed the sacrifice and achievements of the RAAF Catalina crews and the vital role they played in MacArthur's strategic plan for the south-west Pacific. Although most aviation enthusiasts would be aware that the RAAF operated Catalinas during the war, this book explains the background to why these long-distance aircraft were used for

mining operations, when the US forces did not use their Catalinas in the same way.

The book is absorbing, compelling, and powerfully told, with many first-hand recollections from pilots, navigators and gunners who flew on the missions, as well as maintenance crews who serviced the aircraft at forward and rear bases.

The authors conclude the book with an analysis of the significance of the role which the Black Cats and their mine-laying operations played in the war effort. Even in contemporary analyses, their role was largely un-recognised due to the secrecy of the operations.

RAAF Black Cats is an important addition to our understanding of Australia's role in the Pacific War.

The book includes several useful maps showing the areas where the Catalinas operated.

Published by Allen & Unwin; Illustrated edition (June 1, 2020). Paperback, 288 pages. ISBN-10: 1760633062, ISBN-13: 978-1760633066.

RESEARCH CORNER

List of Australian Aviation Firsts

Did you know that Wikipedia users have collated a list of Australian aviation firsts? You can find the list at the following URL:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Australian_aviation_firsts

Air Britain Magazines Available Online

Air Britain is the premier aviation history and spotting society in the UK, and with a great deal of overlap between Australia's early aviation history and British aviation, it may be of interest to discover that several of the excellent Air Britain publications are available online free of charge.

The Air Britain Digital Archive can be found here:

<https://air-britain.com/web/da-publications/>

Beware, the files are large. Plus you may spend a lot of time reading them...

Telling the Jindivik Story?

Next March will mark the 50th anniversary of the last flight of the GAF Jindivik target drone. We are looking for an author to write an article about the Jindivik story. We already have a great deal of content from several sources, but we need somebody to pull it all together. Would you like to compile an article about the Jindivik? Contact the Editor by email on outlook@ahsa.org.

Looking for Information on Genet Radial Engines

Howard Jones at Latrobe Valley is rebuilding an Avro Cadet, a pre WWII RAAF biplane trainer. The aircraft was powered by an Armstrong Siddeley Genet radial engine.

Howard is keen to know if there is anyone who might have undertaken research on the supply of aircraft parts during WWII?

The reason being that Howard has several Genet engines with Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) numbers stamped on them as well as boxes of Genet engine parts with RCAF tags.

The Canadians built Fleet Finch biplanes (probably Fleet Model 7B biplanes, known as a Fawn Mk.1), initially powered by Genet engines but later more with (US) Kinner radial engines and re-engined the earlier ones.

Howard is of the view that the removed engines were shipped to Australia for use in the Avro Cadets along with spares. We know that some parts were made here in Australia. The firm of Repco in Tasmania made cylinders as an example.

Howard is further of the view that importing parts and engines from Canada to support a small fleet of Avro Cadets with Tiger Moths starting to come out of our ears seems a big effort.

Are there any AHSA readers who can throw light on this part of history? Comments via Dave Prossor at president@ahsa.org.au.