



**Tasmanian Aviation
Historical Society**



“ROARING FORTIES”

***OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE TASMANIAN
AVIATION HISTORICAL SOCIETY INCORPORATED***

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EDITORIAL:

Welcome to our 27th Newsletter.

This edition commences the history of helicopters and the roles they have played in Tasmania.

Then down to Hobart where we discover the birth of Brighton Airfield and southern Tasmania's development of aviation that includes passenger, mail and freight services through Launceston to Melbourne with Kingsford Smith's early airline Australian National Airways.

Still in Hobart, in association with the RAAFA, a group of northern TAHS members travelled south to view the restoration process of a Mk 1 Spitfire. A history of the restoration and a pictorial feature of the aircraft is included in this edition.

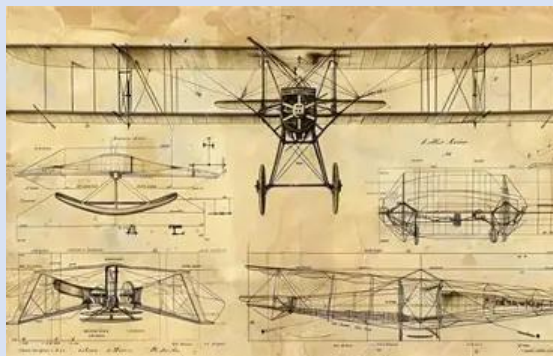
We then continue with the history and training of Tasmanian born pilots of the 7 EFTS.

In early editions of our Newsletter, we presented a series of six Tasmanian born World War 1 "Aces". A seventh "Ace" has been discovered courtesy of one of our readers and we present his story in this issue.

A comparison between the Wright Brothers first flight and the recent Qantas A350-1000 Sunrise flights show the incredible development of aviation in a little over 120 years.

Do you remember together with our coming events and web shop pages make up this our 27th Newsletter.

Hope you enjoy and remember any news or interesting historical items please contact us.



HANGAR 17, LAUNCESTON AIRPORT'S PIECE OF HISTORY



A DC3 and DC4 of ANSETT/ANA outside Hangar 17 TAHS file photo.

Built in 1932, this historic hangar is Tasmania's oldest aviation building. From the outside Hangar 17 looks nothing special, an old tin building that is heavily weather-beaten, but many years ago it was the hangar from which aircraft flew. Known as the Holyman's Hangar, it was erected in 1933 following the formation of Tasmanian Aerial Services by Victor and Ivan Holyman with Laurie Johnson and ultimately became Australian National Airways (ANA). The service initially flew passengers to the Bass Strait islands. In 1957 the hangar was bought by Ansett, who continued to fly aircraft from it until 1960. Ansett also continued to use it for freight until 2001. The hangar simply recalls an era of adventure and nostalgia of a time gone by.

Today, it is home to a boutique distillery, where everything from grain to bottle takes place under one roof. Better known now as Launceston Distillery, the current owners have remained loyal to the building's unique history with a display of yesteryears aviation history. But time and future airport development have now placed this historic building in jeopardy.

Some months ago, the owners of Launceston Distillery were advised by Launceston Airport management that their lease on Hangar 17 will be terminated within three years. The area surrounding Hangar 17 is currently undergoing a major reconstruction with the Tasmanian Aero Club building (formally the 7 EFTS hospital) being demolished and the concern is that Hangar17 could be next to be demolished.

Launceston Airport is Tasmania's oldest airport, full of history and nostalgia that defines the development of Tasmania's aviation history and Hangar 17, is an integral part of this history. And it would be tragic to see the demise of this building.

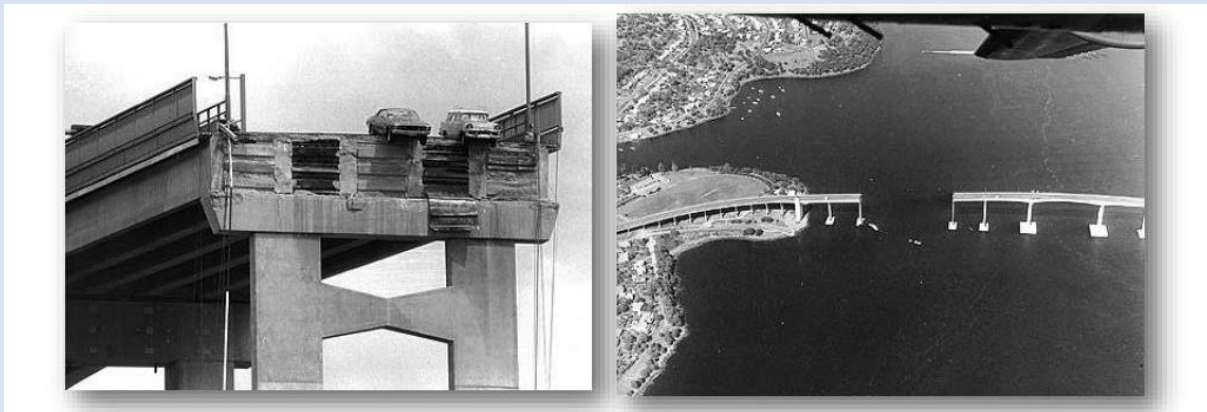
It is understandable that, with the pace that the current aviation industry is developing, constant upgrades and expenditure will always be high on airport's agendas, but in the case of Hangar 17, one would think perhaps history may be more important than development.



A HISTORY OF HELICOPTER OPERATIONS IN TASMANIA

By Peter Manktelow

Helicopters were not based in Tasmania all year round until Peter Hookway set up his operation following the collapse of the Derwent River bridge on the 5th of January 1975. Prior to that date, helicopter companies such as Airfast, Vowell, Jayrow, Helicopter Utilities Pty Ltd (also known as HUPL) and even Ansett and TAA helicopter divisions, came down to Tasmania during the summer season and returned to the mainland once the autumn/winter weather started to set in. The majority of the work in summer was for government departments, both federal and state, with some limited private enterprise in the form of mineral exploration work. It could be said that prior to the early 1950's, helicopters did not feature in Australia except for military aircraft, let alone in Tasmania. Aviation requirements were serviced solely by fixed wing aircraft with limited capability and in a rugged Tasmanian environment bereft of suitable airfields.



Two photos of Hobart's Bridge following the altercation with the Lake Illawarra courtesy Wikipedia.

So, it took a ship to knock out a bridge (as pictured above), that paved the way for Hookway Aviation to set up shop in a little room, initially the old airline catering room, south of the main Llanherne (Hobart) Airport terminal. The State Government, in a very generous decree, gave Hookway an incentive to set up permanently in Tasmania. Here is how it worked. A mainland helicopter company would bid for work, at say \$500 per flight hour flown. Hookway would bid \$550 per hour flown. Ten percent the difference and Hookway won the contract even though it was not the lowest bid! But still the mainland operators prevailed, always chasing the BIG contract, the Hydro Electric Commission (HEC).

Following the collision with the ship "Lake Illawarra" that made the bridge unusable and travelling to the airport difficult to say the least, Hookway introduced their helicopters to the travelling public. A one-way seat on a helicopter from Hobart airport to what was then the Wrest Point Casino car park, cost \$20 (the equivalent of \$124 today) Your choices other than a scenic 15-minute flight by helicopter, was a taxi via Bridgewater or taxi to the Bellerive ferry terminal, then boat or ferry across the Derwent to Sullivan's Cove, then finally a taxi to your destination. Many chose the helicopter ride, which was flown by 2 seat Enstroms or 5 seat Bell Jetrangers. This was a great cash flow for the fledgling company.

A History of Helicopter Operations in Tasmania continued



Photos of an Enstrom (left) and Jetranger Helicopters circa 1975 Courtesy Pinterest.

But why was the Tasmanian Government so keen to have helicopters permanently based in Tasmania? A Simple question, a simple answer. For Search and Rescue Operations! Prior to helicopters being based in the state, whenever an emergency occurred that only a helicopter could be tasked for, the helicopter had to be flown down from the mainland and this took time; considerable time which survivors did not have. Particularly when the weather turned sour. Tasmanian weather extremes, even in summer, can be fatal and waiting sometimes a half to a full day for a Search and Rescue (SAR) helicopter to arrive on the site of an accident or incident was not conducive to a successful outcome. The newly formed State Emergency Service (SES) administered a loose arrangement whereby Hookway could operate anywhere in Tasmania, but had to maintain at least one helicopter that could stop what they were doing if the SES called them to attend an accident. This did not go over too well with the Tasmanian Police, who eventually took control from the SES.

It made sense, as the crew manning a SAR tasked helicopter were invariably from the Police SAR squad. The Bell Jetranger, which was being used at this time, was not the most ideal SAR aircraft, but over time various modifications increased its capability. One modification was a stretcher kit, which allowed two prone patients, an Ambulance or Police officer plus the pilot. Rappelling (abseiling) was introduced as a means of getting police on the ground closer to the incident scene in situations where the helicopter could not land. Winches were to follow much later with bigger aircraft and overwater capability was available via inflated floats. This allowed flight over water beyond autorotational (gliding) distance. Improved instrumentation did allow night operations but was rarely used.

With the arrival of another Bell Jetranger to the fleet, Hookway expanded its client base but with winter's arrival and the restoration of the Derwent River bridge, the work in Tasmania fell off. At some stage aircraft were deployed to the Tanami Desert in the Northern Territory and were also on site with the finding of those sparkling little rocks at what became the Argyle Diamond Mine. In any case, the SAR arrangement was still in place with the state government although it was not exactly lucrative.

A History of Helicopter Operations in Tasmania continued

One contract that did matter and was very popular with the pilots, was the Federal Government's Department of Transport lighthouse contract. The Tasman Island light was de-manned by the late 1970's. whilst the Bruny Island light was accessible by ferry then road. That left the Maatsuyker Island light as the only fully manned remote light in Tasmania, crewed by the traditional three light house keepers and their families. A fortnightly Hookway helicopter flight provided transport for families and supplies. The helicopter was, during this period, a Bell Jetranger on inflated floats. These floats were aerodynamically shaped but still the aircraft wallowed uncomfortably in flight, like a drunken whale.



Photo Maatsuyker Island courtesy Pinterest.

Maatsuyker is a ridge shaped island that lies north-south and directly in the path of the westerly "Roaring Forties" winds. Therefore, turbulence could be a real problem, particularly into the northern helipad which lay in a downwind saddle. Wind strength for Maatsuyker has been recorded as high as 115 mph with snowstorms in the middle of summer not uncommon and fog so thick you could almost eat it.

In an effort to ease mother nature's wrath, a new pad closer to the lighthouse was constructed. This was located halfway down from the top of the ridge on the windward side. That had the aircraft in smooth up flowing air. With a strong wind the aircraft almost refused to descend to the pad, even-though minimum power/pitch was employed. Quite a weird experience. The Maatsuyker runs were very popular, as the route was over some spectacular country.

An example of the versatility of the helicopter was played out on Macquarie Island around this time. A young male scientist (biologist) out exploring the Island, fell down a cliff and was not found until some days later.

His injuries were life threatening and a Navy Destroyer (HMAS *Hobart*) was scrambled from Sydney and dispatched to the island; a 3,000 nautical mile trip. At the same time, a Hookway helicopter (on floats) was flown on board the Australian Antarctic supply ship MV *Thala Dan*, which was in port in Hobart. The ship with helicopter on board, then sailed for Macquarie. The plan was for the helicopter to fly off when it was within range of Macquarie,

A History of Helicopter Operations in Tasmania continued

pick up the patient and wait for the Navy ship to get within range and then fly the patient to HMAS *Hobart*. The ship could then, at full speed, medevac the patient back to Hobart and hospital care. The *Hobart* did not have a helideck, so a rough makeshift timber one was constructed on the aft end of the destroyer. Just how precarious this landing site was and the skill required by the helicopter pilot in a less than calm sea, can only be imagined. I think the pilot, Nigel Osborn, may have got a medal for that flight.

Sadly, the patient in question passed away shortly after arriving at Hobart's hospital.

Even more popular was the three-monthly flight, completely circumnavigating the state with a couple of Department of Transport (Lighthouse Service) engineers, who inspected all the lights in Tasmania (which by now were all operated automatically and battery powered). There were about a dozen lights that required servicing and the aircraft would be shut down for an hour or so before proceeding on to the next light. This shutdown time allowed the profitable employment of a crayfish ring. The trip normally took about a week to go around the state and included King Island, Flinders Island and Cat Island. This island lies to the east of Flinders Island and had a cement helipad. On short final approach, a proliferation of Tiger Snakes could be observed warming themselves on the pad. Pilots usually blew them off the pad with the rotor downwash but then refused to exit the aircraft after shut-down! Cat Island indeed. It should have been named SNAKE ISLAND !!!!



Aerial view of Cat Island off Flinders Island Photo courtesy of Wikipedia.

Peter Hookway had employed a lady (Helga) who had tertiary business qualifications and experience. A good move. He rushed into the office one day, as usual late for his flight to Melbourne and then on to Paris. He was going to see a French company then called AEROSPATIALE HELICOPTERS (now called Airbus Industries), about purchasing a new type of helicopter called an ECUREUIL or in English, Squirrel.

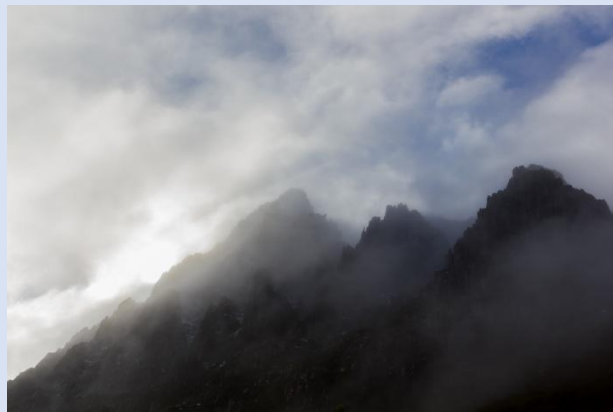
A History of Helicopter Operations in Tasmania continued

The model was designated as an AS350B that was a six-seat machine and a delight to fly. Hookway Aviation was to become one of the first operators of this helicopter type in Australia, but more on that later. Back to Peter rushing into our cramped little office. He threw a file on the Operations Manager's desk and addressing Helga and the Ops Manager he said "this is last year's bid for the Hydro contract. See what you can do with it and submit a bid as I won't be back in time" Helga and the Ops Manager did not have any supporting costing documentation. They were completely in the dark, so in desperation they just added 5% to the previous year's bid and submitted it to the HEC (Hydro Electric Commission) for the operation of two Bell Jetranger helicopters for the summer season. One Jetranger to be based at Strathgordon and the other at Tullah.

AND THE SUCCESSFUL BID WAS.....HOOKWAY AVIATION !!!!!

As it turned out, the company only had one Jetranger immediately available, so the second machine (the Tullah aircraft), was initially a Hughes 500D dry leased from Jayrow Helicopters in Melbourne. The Hughes 500 was replaced after a couple of weeks when the second Jetranger came back on line. Finally, the Hydro contract was to be flown by a Tasmanian helicopter company and at that time, the only helicopter company in Tassie.

The flying for the HEC was mainly down the rugged west and south west of the state and was enjoyed by all, with crews overnighting at the very comfortable Hydro Chalets at Strathgordon and Tullah. Weather was always a challenge, but provided pilots always had a "Plan B", they could keep out of trouble. A new term was coined for flying in Western Tasmania: "scud running".



Tasmania's notorious West Coast weather puts a new meaning to "Scud Running"

Now is probably a good time to take a break. It takes Tasmanian helicopter history up to around the late 1970's.

The next issue of our "Roaring Forties" newsletter, will lead in to Peter Hookway's sale of the company to well-known Australian company, BRAMBLES the operation of the Squirrel helicopter and the involvement with the Franklin dam dispute.

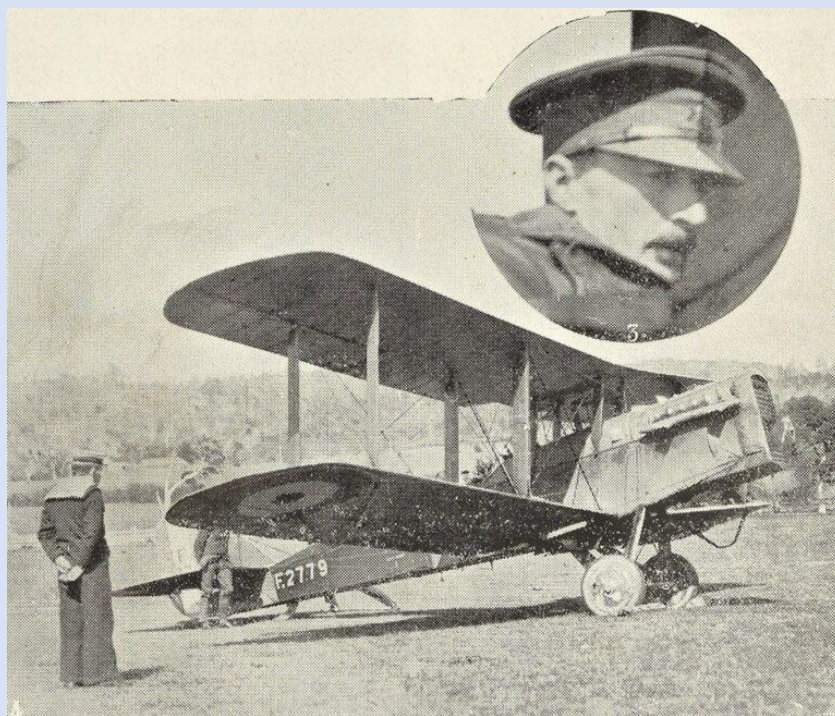
BRIGHTON, HOBART'S AVIATION BIRTHPLACE

By Wayne Dearing

Following Delfosse Badgery's flights in 1914 at the Hobart Showgrounds and Elwick Racetrack, together with the impact of World War 1, aviation suddenly became an important factor in Tasmania's development. With many demobbed military pilots trying to make a living, it fell to Arthur Long of Tea Tree (who later became famous for his Bass Strait crossing flight) and his passenger (the manager of the Hydro Electric Department), who in October 1919 became the first recorded people to fly over Brighton. This would become Hobart's first airfield.

Following a Mercury Newspaper publicity stunt, comprising newspapers being delivered by air with Long as the pilot and his assistant throwing papers out of the aircraft whilst flying over St Marks Churchyard, Bagdad and eventually Deloraine and Launceston, air travel became a popular subject. Much of the talk was about landing grounds and with the land around Hobart somewhat hilly, Brighton became an obvious candidate as it had flat land, good transport by rail and road and was reasonably close to the city.

Unfortunately, enthusiasm faded as on the mainland small airlines came and went. It arguably took a tragedy in 1920, when a ship and a search aircraft both disappeared whilst crossing Bass Strait and a second aircraft, piloted by Major Anderson, searched the East Coast then flew inland and landed at Brighton. Why Brighton he did not say, but Anderson was the first pilot to land at Brighton.



Major Anderson and his aircraft. TAHS library.

Brighton, Hobart's Aviation Birthplace continued

By the late 1920's, aircraft had improved and interest was growing in possible passenger services. The year 1928 saw Charles Kingsford Smith and Charles Ulm - famous for the first to fly over the Pacific Ocean - set up Australian National Airways (ANA). In 1930 they commenced Sydney-Brisbane and Sydney-Melbourne services, with plans to expand these services to Tasmania. For an airstrip, they found an almost perfectly flat paddock of 130 acres near the Brighton Racecourse, part of R C Thompson's Summerville estate. Brighton Councillors agreed they would do all they could to help the fledgling airline, with an aim of gaining a permanent landing ground.

On 16 January 1931, ANA began a service between Melbourne and Launceston and announced they were planning a southern service using the Brighton landing ground. At 2:30pm on the 25th January 1931, the *Southern Sky*, flown by Kingsford Smith himself and twelve passengers, touched down.



Southern Sky after landing at Brighton Airfield TAHS Library

Over a thousand people gathered to view the aircraft's arrival. Whilst there, Kingsford Smith took the official party on a short flight and flew fourteen joy flights, carrying 170 passengers at ten shillings a ticket.

Next day there were thirteen more flights and almost three thousand spectators. A tidy little profit for Kingsford Smith, but then ANA needed every shilling it could make.

But due to the continual flights which ploughed up the ground, the joyrides had to be curtailed. Worse still, Kingsford Smith said Brighton's landing ground was unsuitable for heavy machines like *Southern Sky*.

Whilst the ground was large, splendidly located and possessed a perfect approach from all directions, the surface was far too loose. So, the *Southern Sky* left for the 45-minute flight back to Western Junction, with eleven passengers aboard and no more flights south scheduled for the near future.

Brighton, Hobart's Aviation Birthplace continued

Not to be outdone, on 29 January the Aero Club flew two Moths to Brighton. Spectators soon appeared and many enjoyed joyrides. Conditions were ideal and the smaller and much lighter Moths did not damage the surface as did Kingsford Smith's heavier aircraft. Furthermore, the Aero Club's instructor Captain Francis, said the ground could be made suitable at little expense and some fences and stones were removed.

In February the *Southern Cloud* arrived at Brighton, carrying Charles Ulm and twelve passengers. Heavy rain on route made visibility poor and it was not possible to cross the hills leading to Brighton, so the pilot flew south, met the Derwent Estuary and followed it back to Brighton where he found an opening in the clouds. By following the road, they were soon over the landing field and made a safe landing.



File photo of Southern Cloud courtesy of Pinterest.

It would appear that Ulm and the other visitors had come to attend a public meeting about an aerodrome site. There were many suggestions, including Elwick, New Norfolk and Green Point at Brighton, the latter being (as stated by one person), an ideal site with a firm surface, excellent transport and nearer to Hobart than Brighton. Ulm himself said he hoped a more suitable area could be found, due to Brighton's surface being soft and expensive to maintain. Ultimately the meeting confirmed the necessity of an aerodrome and set up a committee to organise it.

Brighton, Hobart's Aviation Birthplace continued

Also at the meeting, the president of the Aero Club advised that landing grounds now had to be licensed. The Aero Club had obtained a lease on the Brighton airstrip and as soon as the club obtained a licence, an instructor would commence to train pupils.

He further added that there was great interest in air travel generally, with a crowd of 20,000 watching a recent air pageant at Western Junction.



Phot of crowd at the Aero Club's Western Junction Padgent TAHS File photo

Despite the problems with Brighton, on 8th March 1931, ANA began its Hobart to Melbourne service using the aerodrome. *Southern Moon* flew from Melbourne to Western Junction and then to Brighton with seven passengers.

The first scheduled passenger service left Brighton aerodrome at 9am the next day, arriving at Western Junction at 9:45am. The aircraft then left for Melbourne ten minutes later and arrived at 12:55pm, just under four hours of travel in total. This then occurred on three days a week

In the meantime, the Aerodrome Inquiry Committee continued to study possible sites at Rokeby, Sorell, Mt Nelson, Bridgewater and Glenorchy.

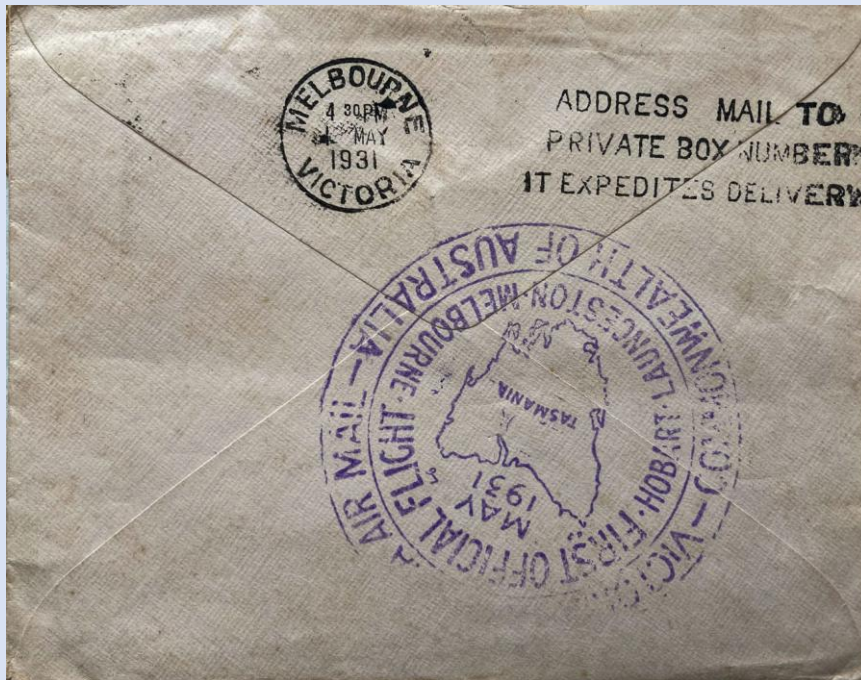
The two most promising sites were Green Point and Elwick, but both presented a major problem. Green Point had Hydro Electric Commission high tension lines (which the Hydro refused to move) and Elwick was owned by the Tasmanian Racing Club and was really too small. In the absence of an alternative, Brighton was licensed.

The aero club began training with eight pupils, ANA flights continued with good bookings and joy flights where possible. Then on 22 March, ANA's *Southern Cloud* disappeared on a flight between Sydney and Melbourne that resulted in ten deaths.

Brighton, Hobart's Aviation Birthplace continued

A less disastrous incident happened on 23rd March, where *Southern Sun* crashed on landing. Fortunately, on this occasion there were no injuries. As a result of these two accidents, passenger numbers on the Melbourne to Sydney route fell, although numbers from Brighton remained much the same, about seven on each trip.

However, progress continued and on the 9th of April, the famous *Southern Cross*, in which Kingsford-Smith and Ulm had crossed the Pacific, entered the Bass Strait service and landed at Brighton with pilot Kingsford-Smith and seven passengers.



Back of an envelope designed by Australia Post for the first airmail Tasmania to Victoria.

Airmail was the next excitement and on 1st May, ANA planes began to carry it. A letter written in the morning and posted by 7:00 am, could be flown to Melbourne and delivered that afternoon. Even faster than today's mail!!

Mother nature was determined to have the last say on the inaugural flight. Due to unfavourable weather, the 2,518 letters did not actually leave from Brighton but were driven to Western Junction.

There were also various efforts to fly mail from Great Britain and on the 1st May, letters were landed at Brighton, although due to the aircraft being delayed en-route, they had taken four weeks to arrive, about the same time as sea mail.

Brighton, Hobart's Aviation Birthplace continued

Winter brought more problems for the fledgling industry. With Western Junction often too boggy for aircraft to safely land, they were often forced to land at Antill Ponds or Woodberry, with cars ferrying passengers back to Launceston. There were only a few occasions when aircraft could not land at Brighton, mostly due to bad weather over the Midlands. So, it seemed Brighton was a good site, whilst Western Junction was often unusable. However, ANA pushed on and on 25 May, commenced a daily service, Brighton to Launceston (or Woodberry) then Melbourne. Now you could receive an answer to a letter from Melbourne the next day.

Better still, you could hop over to Melbourne, spend the afternoon and evening there and return the next day, but only if you could afford it as air travel was expensive and out of reach of the ordinary person. But the cost did not deter people to come and view this wonderful new medium of travel. There were large crowds at the aerodrome on the 24th May, when two aircraft (ANA's *Southern Star* and the aero club's *Moth*) were joined by another *Moth* from Shell, who were also looking for landing sites in Tasmania. *Southern Star* provided joy flights and the two *Moths* provided an exciting aerobatic display. It was at this time that ANA issued a warning that the success of the service depended on the public's support. This was not enough, as winter deterred people from flying and on 11th June ANA reverted to a tri-weekly service. Additionally, the mail service was well supported but the freight was disappointing.

ANA continued in the doldrums and no one was really surprised when on 20th June, it suspended its services. The airline was running at a loss due to the Depression and the *Southern Cloud* disaster, which created not only a loss of confidence but money as well, with the disappearance of an expensive aircraft and lengthy searches for it. The last ANA scheduled service left Brighton on the 26th June. ANA had asked the federal government for a subsidy, but 1931 was not a good time to be asking for money and the government refused.



Acknowledgement: The author acknowledges the generous permission granted by Hobart author Alison Alexander for her kind permission to access her manuscripts of Brighton and its history.

TASMANIAN TRAINEES AT 7 EFTS WESTERN JUNCTION 1940-44

By Wayne Dearing

Wing Commander John R Ratten DFC

John Ratten was born in Sheffield in 1912 and commenced training at 7 EFTS on 3rd April 1941. After graduating, he was posted to 2 SFTS (Service Flying Training School) on the 2nd of June, before being sent overseas (via Canada) for service with the RAF on the 22nd November. After completing operational training, Ratten joined No 72 Squadron RAF - a Spitfire unit based at Biggin Hill - on 22nd February. He remained with the squadron until 31st July, participating in several operations including top cover for Boston bombers over Abbeville,(France), bomber escorts to Dieppe and sweeps over Dunkirk and Cape Gris-Nez areas.



Wing Commander John Ratten and his Spitfire Tikkie Photo courtesy AWM.

On 2nd August he was posted to No 453 Squadron in Scotland, still flying Spitfires and remaining with this unit until 11th May 1943, before joining the Second Tactical Air Force as Wing Commander Operations on 20th July. He was awarded the DFC on 15th June 1943.

Ratten suffered from ill health whilst in the UK and sadly died from a chest infection.

Flight Lieutenant Richard Darcey

Darcey was posted to 7 EFTS on the 1st May until 20th August 1941. After graduating, he was posted on attachment to the RCAF at Aylmer, Canada, for advance training from 23rd October 1941 until 16th January 1942. He sailed, on attachment, to the RAF and undertook

Tasmanian Trainees at 7 EFTS Western Junction 1940-44 continued

further operational training, until joining Non 453 Squadron in Scotland for operations in the European Theatre.



Flight Lieutenant Richar Darcey. Photo courtesy AWM.

He returned to Australia in early 1944 and joined 79 Squadron on 21st May, operating in the South West Pacific Theatre. At the time, the squadron was reduced to only two Spitfires due to a lack of spare parts, resulting in the squadron being withdrawn to Darwin. On the 6th October 1944 Darcey was killed whilst flying a P-38 Lightning that appeared to have lost an engine shortly after take-off. His body was never recovered.

Flight Lieutenant Edwin Rye George Cooper.

Hobart born Cooper joined the 7 EFTS on the 29th May 1941, having previously been posted to observer and Bomb Aimer/Air Gunner School. After 12 hours of flight training, he had his training discontinued by his CFI on the 26th June, as “not being suited for further training as a pilot.”. Cooper was then posted to Air Navigation School on the 24th July

On the 10th January 1942, he was posted to 7 SFTS, followed by a short stint at SHQ Rathmines and Port Moresby in April 1942. He served with 27 OTU from November 1942 to September 1943 and attended 13 GR Nav Course in September 1944.



Tasmanian Trainees at 7 EFTS Western Junction 1940-44 continued

Flight Lieutenant Edwin Rye George Cooper. (Continued)

Cooper was then posted to Production Test and Ferry Section and later to No 67 Squadron, where he spent six months flying Avro Ansons before heading to 7 OTU in September 1945.

Ironically, whilst on gunnery practice in a Fairy Battle at Port Pirie he, *“negligently allowed one bullet to be fired through the port tailplane and elevator causing damage to extent of not less than 4 pounds”*. He was fined the sum of ten shillings towards the cost of repair.

Pilot Officer Maxwell Tylney Cotton DFC

Cotton was born in 1921 at Swansea on Tasmania’s East Coast and was posted to 7 EFTS on the 21st June 1941. After graduating, he departed for Canada and completed his Service Flying Training before departing for the United Kingdom, where he was posted to No 87 Squadron RAF and flew Westland Whirlwinds, a twin engine heavy fighter/fighter bomber.

The Squadron was tasked with convoy escort, attacks on airfields, railways and roads in Northern France and attacks on enemy shipping, especially E-Boats and armed trawlers in the English Channel.



Pilot Officer Maxwell Cotton DFC Photo courtesy of AWM.

On the 15th June 1943, whilst flying a Whirlwind against four German minesweepers near Guernsey, his aircraft was hit and seen to blow up. Declared missing in action, he was presumed dead. Cotton’s performance with the Squadron was recognised with the posthumous award of the DFC on the 6th July 1943.

Tasmanian Trainees at 7 EFTS Western Junction 1940-44 continued

Flying Officer Francis Eward Keach

Born at Oatlands, he was posted to 7 EFTS on the 26th June 1941 and after graduating, was posted to 1 SFTS in August. He was then posted to No 1 Communication Flight at Laverton. From January 1942 until December, 1944 he was engaged solely as a flying instructor, amassing some 1,900 hours. Interestingly, from March 1942 to June 1943 he served as a Sergeant Instructor at 7 EFTS.



Flying Officer Francis Keach Phot courtesy NAA

Sadly, Keach and a student were both killed in an aircraft accident at 1 OTU, East Sale on the 29th December 1944, whilst practising single-engine flying after take-off in a Beaufort.

Flight Lieutenant John Hollowes Waterhouse

Born in Launceston 1922, Waterhouse was posted to 7 EFTS on the 26th June 1941 and following his graduation, was posted to 14 Depot, Halifax, Canada on attachment to the RCAF.

February 1942 found him posted on attachment to the RAF and following his operational training, he joined No 453 Squadron on the 18th August.

Waterhouse was then posted to RAF Gibraltar on the 21st October 1942, joining No 249 Squadron on Malta, where he flew a Spitfire on 83 sorties over 160 hours between the 15th August 1942 and the 28th July 1943.

Tasmanian Trainees at 7 EFTS Western Junction 1940-44 continued

Flight Lieutenant John Hollowes Waterhouse (Continued)

He then flew with No 66 Squadron over England, France and Belgium where he completed 108 sorties over 275 flying hours between February and November 1944.



Flight Lieutenant John Waterhouse Photo courtesy AWM

Waterhouse flew many invasion beachhead patrols including 6th June 1944, amassing 566 flying hours on Spitfires at war's end.

Flight Sergeant Francis Leslie Hicks

Posted to 7 EFTS on the 26th June 1941, Latrobe born Hicks, upon graduating, was posted overseas to the RCAF in August 1941, before being posted on attachment to the RAF in February 1942. He then joined No 87 Squadron RAF in July and then No 263 Squadron, flying Westland Whirlwinds.

On the 19th February 1943 he was killed, when a Whirlwind he was flying at low-level during an Army support exercise, struck a tree and forced the aircraft into a violent horizontal spin, from which it never recovered.

Tasmanian Trainees at 7 EFTS Western Junction 1940-44 continued

Flight Lieutenant William Lorenzo Cox

Cox was born in Lindisfarne in 1911 and joined the 7 EFTS on the 15th August 1941. In August he was sent to 6 SFTS, before joining No 20 Squadron that was equipped with Catalinas, in July 1944. The squadron conducted sorties over Bangka Strait, Celebes and Java and flew missions to lay mines in Manila Harbour and later off the coast of China. Additionally, he delivered and extracted agents from behind enemy lines.



Catalina aircraft flown by No 20 Squadron courtesy of AWM.

Flight Sergeant Arthur Robert Spencer

Arthur Spencer, born in Hobart, was posted to 7 EFTS in September 1941 and No1 SFTS in November. He was sent on attachment to the RAF in May 1942 where he undertook advanced operational training. In February 1943 he joined No 165 Squadron RAF, flying Spitfires out of Scotland.

Less than four months later, on 6th June, he was killed in an aircraft accident in Scotland.

Warrant Officer Dennis Robert Hill

Joining 7 EFTS in November 1941, he graduated and was posted to 7 SFTS in February 1942. Hobart born Hill was then posted overseas on attachment to the RAF in August. He completed advanced and operational training before joining No 70 Squadron RAF, flying Vickers Wellington bombers on the 6th September 1943.

Hill was killed in an aircraft accident on 30th December 1943 at Foggia, Italy.

Acknowledgements: The author acknowledges the kind permission of author George Ashwood for access to his book the "RAAF Pilots of Western Junction."

ROD MCNEILL AND HIS MARK 1 SPITFIRE

By Wayne Dearing

On Sunday the 19th July this year, a group of TAHS members met with members of the RAAFA in Hobart and following a pleasant morning tea, made their way down to a boat shed on the edge of the Derwent River at Margate to view a retired farmer's dream – an almost fully built Spitfire Mark 1 replica.



Rod McNeill's Spitfire

Before we learn about the building of the aircraft, some history of what surely must be one of the most famous aircraft ever built. Celebrating the 90th year of the Spitfire, what members had in store was an interpretation talk, photo opportunity and a Q&A with Rod McNeill. Rod was the man responsible for all of this; a full size replica of the Supermarine Spitfire Mark 1 with a two-blade fixed pitch wooden prop, as was the case when the original was first delivered to 19 Squadron RAF Duxford in 1938.

The laminar wing provides a faster wing but with less lift, as it does not need to lift all the guns and ammunition as in WWII. The wing is the most difficult part of the plane to build. In the centre, just behind the firewall, is the fuel tank. It is a 300-litre tank providing around a thousand nautical miles endurance



Rod McNeill and his Mark 1 Spitfire continued

With a cruise speed of around 300 knots (556 Kms an hour), it will be quite an economical aircraft to fly around Australia to airshows, not having the 12-cylinder Merlin engine. Also, the engine is a lot lighter at 350 kilos, versus the Merlin at 850 kilos.

All the instruments in the cockpit are original, from a Spitfire museum in England. There are a few newer gauges related to this engine type for in flight monitoring. This engine has never been in a Spitfire before; it is a powerplant in Mustangs and P39's. It is basically a 9-litre racing engine stressed out to plus 7g's and negative 4 g's. It is fully aerobatic. The distance between the wheels on the undercarriage is quite narrow and this full- size replica aircraft is the same, so it will be "quite flighty" on the ground. Therefore, you have to be on top of your directional control on the ground.



The Instrument Panel and Interior of Mark's Spitfire

It is planned to become a two-seater with the mounts in place behind the pilot's seat, however the test flights have to be done first with a single pilot. The control stick has the original gun button on it and the cockpit instrument layout is original. The original braking on the Mk 1 was terrible, so this machine has disc brakes. It has a hand brake as well as brakes on the pedals for differential steering.

The hydraulics are electrically driven and mainly operate the undercarriage, which is locked into position from the cockpit. Should an electrical failure occur, there is a hand pump - open the valves and around 40 strokes should do the job. The undercarriage will fold down under its own weight.

Rod McNeill and his Mark 1 Spitfire continued

When Rod McNeill (a retired farmer who decided to commence this task), was asked if he had an engineering background, he replied that after thirteen years “I do now!” He had been on the land for most of his career and now retired, took this project on, first starting to work with the idea in 2003.

He estimates he has clocked up 15 thousand hours to date. The Spitfire has undergone four inspections during the build, with another to be done when the wings are fitted. “The paperwork is nearly as much as the plane weighs!” joked Rod. He said “flying the elliptical wing Spitfire is always something I've wanted to do; those who have flown the Spitfire say it is the most beautiful plane to fly”.

Rod McNeill, a 69-yearold Vietnam veteran, has spent thousands of hours researching, planning, and sourcing original parts, including the cockpit dials from a museum in the UK. He has also had to teach himself how to weld, work with carbon fibre and use computer-aided design software.

Most of the parts he has painstakingly crafted from hand, many through a process of trial and error, so that they are exact replicas of the original. "It's a true replica" he said. “All the shapes you see here are from original drawings - all the dimensions are the same as the original." There were parts he could not do himself.

He tracked down a replica plane manufacturer in the US to build the almost 3-metre long propellor and it took five years to track down another craftsman in South Australia who could replicate the Spitfire's cabin canopy. To date it has taken McNeill eight years of painstaking work and he anticipates a further two years before the aircraft takes to the air.

Subject to negotiations for the hiring of a hangar at Cambridge Airport, the aircraft will be moved from Margate to Cambridge for the final construction stage. This will enable the wings to be installed and the 40 hours of test flights to begin.



The photo on the left highlights the aircraft's serial number.

Rod McNeill and his Mark 1 Spitfire continued



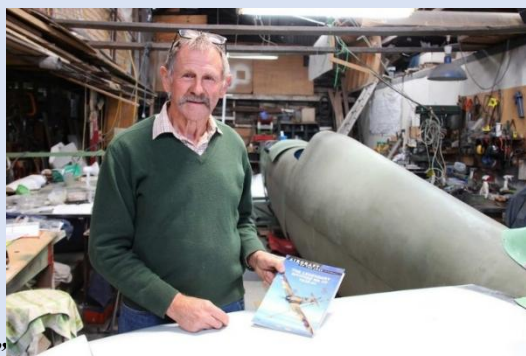
“Food Glorious Food”

Following the trip to view the Spitfire, members returned to Davey Street and continued their day with the newly minted Aviators Commemorative Lunch. An informative few hours with fellow colleagues sharing an interest in aviation; military, historical and civilian.

TAHS members from both Launceston and Hobart joined members from the Aero Club of Southern Tasmania and the RAAFA members. Almost 70 people enjoyed a succulent roast lunch followed by an informative talk by Wing Commander David Stary, Commanding Officer, 29 City of Hobart Squadron, about the RAAF’s past and present Antarctic operations.



An attentive audience on the left listening to Wing Commander David Stary, on the right.



Rod MacNeill the dream soon to become a reality.

Rod McNeill and his Mark 1 Spitfire continued

“FOUR DAYS LATER”



As noted in the bottom right hand corner Thursday 23rd July was an early start for the Spitfire and her crew. In a two-truck “OVERSIZE” convoy, they began the slow trip via the Bowen Bridge to Dowsing Point and then Cambridge Airport, where eager hands assisted the unloading of the fuselage and wings. As shown in the photo below this was a very satisfying moment that, for the first time in 23 years, the wheels, of the Mk1 Spitfire touched the tarmac of an airport and the work begins. More in future editions



The author and TAHS wish to acknowledge the assistance, co-operation and welcome given by members of the RAAFA during this tour and the following luncheon and look forward to join the RAAFA in additional functions in the future.

THE SEVENTH WORLD WAR 1 TASMANIAN ACE

By Wayne Dearing

Eustace Slade Headlam was born at Bothwell in May 1892 and was a law student at the University of Tasmania, before enlisting on the 14th April 1915 and did not return to Australia until March 1919, having reached the rank of lieutenant.

He initially served with the 3rd Light Horse Regiment and embarked with their 6th reinforcements as a trooper for service overseas on the 17th June 1915, departing Melbourne on HMAS *Wandilla*. He joined his unit at Gallipoli on October 1915 and served on the peninsula until the Australians were evacuated in December.

He later served in the Imperial Camel Corps before transferring to the Australian Flying Corps and was mentioned in despatches for his service post war. Headlam was initially an observer, but later qualified as a pilot and took part in the Battle of Meggido in the final stages of the war and was credited with five aerial victories.



Tasmanian aircrew from No 1 Squadron AFC. Headlam is last on the right Photo courtesy of AWM.

Married to Geraldine Archer in 1926, Headlam was an avid golfer, winning the Tasmanian Open in 1913 and 1919 and the Tasmanian amateur championship five times between 1912 and 1927. Headlam turned this into a career, when in the 1930's he became a professional golfer.

Headlam was also a first-class cricketer. A left-hand batsman and a slow left arm bowler who played one first class game for Tasmania.

Headlam died in 1958, aged 66 years.

TWO FLIGHTS 123 YEARS APART

By Wayne Dearing

Whilst watching the epic flight of the Qantas Airbus A350-1000 from Melbourne to Toulouse, on Flight Radar, I couldn't help but look back and make a comparison of the first sustained controlled flight and this epic non-stop flight.

On the 17th December 1903 the Wright Bros achieved what man had been dreaming about for more than a century – *“a sustained powered flight of an engine powered heavier than air aircraft.”*



That first flight many years ago of the Wright Flyer

The Wright Flyer was a single place biplane with anhedral (drooping) wings, a front double elevator (canard) and rear double rudder. The aircraft was powered by a 12 horse-power petrol driven engine with two contrarotating pusher propellers. The brothers had earlier developed “wing warping control” and a three-axis control system that allowed stability and effective steering.

The Wright Flyer Specification

Wingspan	104 feet 4 inches	Aircraft Length	21 feet 1 inch
Weight empty	605 pounds	Maximum speed	30 mph
Service ceiling	30 feet.		
Distance flown	852 feet.		

Although the brother made three preceding flights on this day it is generally considered the fourth flight was the record flight.

Two Flights 123 Years Apart continued



Touching down on Toulouse after 24 hours 24 minutes.

THE AIRBUS A350-1000 ULR, pictured above, has just completed the world's longest non-stop flight from Melbourne to Toulouse a distance of 12,460 nautical miles in 24 hours 24 minutes. Below are the aircraft's specs so that you can compare them with the Wright Flyer

Wingspan	64.75 metres	(212 feet)
Fuselage Length	73.79 metres	(242 feet)
Max Take-off weight	710,000 lbs	(322,000kgs) Ansee-ANA
Cruising Speed	Mach 0.88	(562 miles per hour)
Approach Speed	240 knots	(276 miles per hour):
Service ceiling	41,450 feet	(12,633 metres)
Passenger Capacity	480 in an all-economy configuration.	
Engines	2 x Rolls Royce Trent XWB - 97	

An incredible journey in little more than 120 years. Just shows the astounding development that surrounds the aviation industry since that day back in 1903 when two men fulfilled their dream.

DO YOU REMEMBER?

- 1934** QANTAS Ltd in partnership with Imperial Airways Ltd (later British Overseas Airways Corporation Imperial Airways Ltd, BOAC) formed QANTAS Empire Airways Ltd. From this time the airline was officially known as QANTAS.
- 1935** In October Australian National Airways (ANA), formerly Adelaide Airways Ltd commenced operations, linking a number of South Australian country centres and flying to every state in Australia. In October 1957 ANA was bought out by Ansett Airways to become Ansett-ANA
- 1962** On the 26th May No 10 Squadron, RAAF, Townsville received the first three of twelve Lockheed P2V-7 Neptunes.
- 1986** In May Trans Australian Airlines (TAA) announced it would change its name to Australian Airways to coincide with the delivery of its first Boeing 737-300s.
- 1995** On the 6th July the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) was established as an independent safety authority.
- 1998** Seventy years on, Lang Kidby, re-created Bert Hinkler's historic solo flight from England to Australia flying an exact copy of Hinkler's aircraft, which he built himself.
- 2001** On the 6th March QANTAS announced plans to include twelve new Airbus aircraft (launched as the A380), making it one of the first users of the new aircraft when it entered service in 2006.
- 2003** In February three RAAF Hercules and 4 F/A-18 Hornets left Australia for Iraq. By April the war was over and all Hornets returned safely to Australia.



RAAF Hornet

MEMORIES OF TRANS AUSTRALIA AIRLINES - TAA

Announcing the opening of the new look TAA Museum on Tuesday 11 August 2026 for a special opening between 10am - 3pm. Our new location is 83-87 Operations Road Tullamarine, located in the Old Qantas Engineering Training School. Normal operational days (after opening) are Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursdays from 10am to 2pm. Would be a good destination to visit. A new look museum with expanded displays and improved visitor experiences.



TAA DC-9'S and a Boeing 727 at Tullamarine Airport.



Bristol 170-31 c/n 13187. Sold to Trans-Australia Airlines - May 1961. Operated its final T.A.A. revenue service Madang - Lae - February 24, 1967.

105 YEARS OF THE FIELDS ESSENDON AIRPORT HISTORY PRESERVED

Essendon Airport celebrated 105 years since being officially gazetted as an airfield. Over the past century, the airport has evolved alongside Melbourne, growing from a pioneering aviation hub into a dynamic mixed-use precinct. Today it remains one of Australia's most important general aviation airports.



Above an aerial view of Essendon today and below a snapshot of Essendon circa 1963.



TAHS COMING EVENTS

September 01	Executive meeting Glebe.
October 06	Guest speaker night Glebe with Stephen Ross and his Winjeel.
October 31	Bunnings Kings Meadows Sausage Sizzle Volunteers invited.
November 03	Executive meeting Glebe
November 28 and 29	Tasmanian Heritage and Military Fair Deloraine Showgrounds
December 01	Guest speaker and sausage sizzle night, Guest is Hoey Stobart
2027	
March 06,07 and 08	Sheffield Steamfest March long-weekend



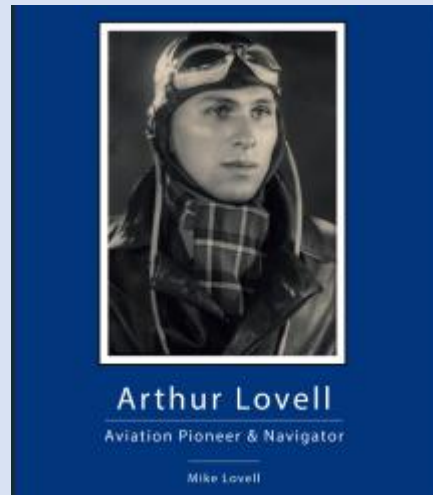
Members gathered at August's Guest Speaker Night giving full attention to Martin's talk.

Remember October and December's guest speaker's night with the gates opening at 6:00pm

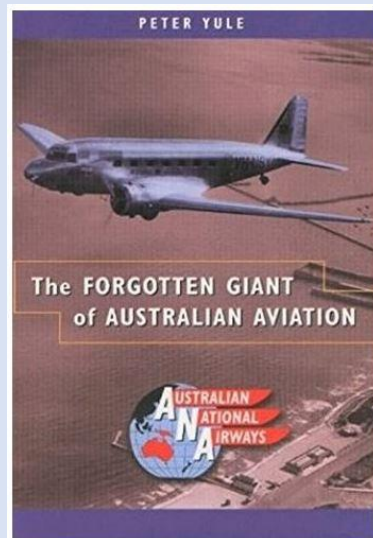
CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS FROM TAHS WEB SHOP



TAHS CAPS \$25.00



ARTHUR LOVELL'S LIFE \$50.00



THE HISTORY OF ANA \$50.00

REMEMBER: WE CAN POST THEM DIRECT TO YOU

ONE PARCEL \$15.00 TWO PARCELS \$25.00

SEE YOU IN DECEMBER!!