



## The Old Fliers Group

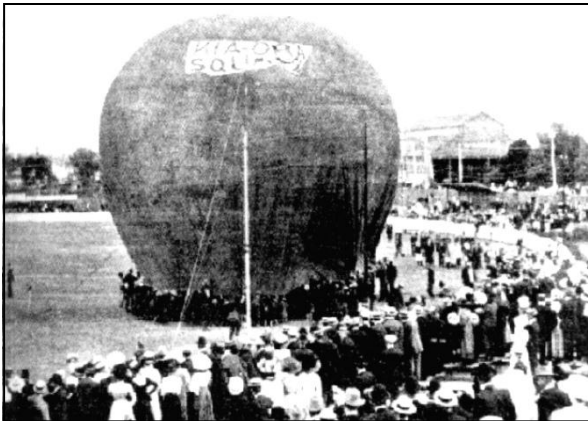
Attached to the Royal Aero Club of WA (Inc).

Coordinator: Brian John, Ph 9883 8001

### Bulletin Sheet No 29, October 2006

#### Last Meeting

About ninety members of the Old Fliers Group enjoyed a scintillating talk by Ted Fletcher on the history of aviation in Western Australia. Ted began with the first balloon flight by "Professor" Price in Perth in 1891. He went on to cover the contraption designed by Andrew Barr in 1903, the balloon flights by Sebphie and Eastwood in 1910, the early designs of McMullin and Henderson, also in 1910, and the first flight of a heavier-than-air machine by J.J. Hammond in January 1911. After that followed Alex Fraser's failed attempt in Albany in 1913 and the brief appearance of Andrew Jones in Perth in 1914. He also spoke on the successful Kalgoorlie Aeroplane Syndicate that produced a biplane in 1914-15. Ted's coverage finished at 1919 when Major Norman Brearley returned from WWI with two Avros to introduce commercial aviation to WA.



*The Sebphie balloon in Perth in 1910.*



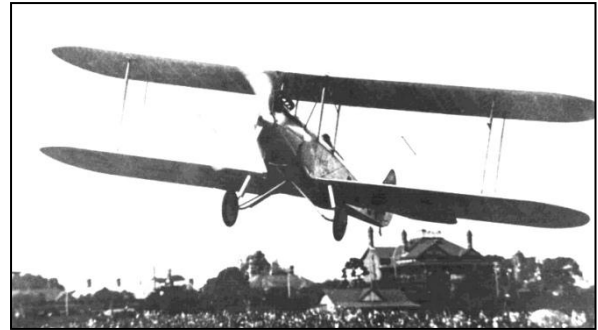
*The first flight of a heavier-than-air machine in 1911.*

Ted's was an informative and entertaining talk that drew many questions and discussion from the audience. Feedback from members present indicated that there should be more history discussed at future meetings.

#### Mini Speaker

The mini-speaker for September was Harry O'Neil who told us of some little-known facts relating to Bert Hinkler and his fatal crash in 1933. Harry had seen the Hinkler house being demolished in Southampton, UK, before being transported to Bundaberg where it was rebuilt to incorporate the Hinkler Museum.

In his travels, Harry has visited the reconstructed house/museum and has also visited the Hinkler grave in Florence. He was dismayed at the poor condition of the headstone. The Bundaberg museum has been made aware of the state of the grave and moves are now being made to repair it. Harry has also visited the crash site in the mountains near the village of Cetica about 40 km east of Florence where a permanent plaque marks the spot.



*Bert Hinkler at Loton Park Perth on April 1, 1928.*

Harry also told of how a small piece of wood from the Hinkler glider of 1912 was carried aboard the ill-fated Challenger shuttle. It was recovered from the Atlantic Ocean and is now on display in the Bundaberg Museum.

Harry's was a most informative talk that acquainted members with little-known facts and interesting personal experiences. Well done Harry.

#### Hal Sutton

Nonagenarian, Hal Sutton was so moved by the material that was discussed during the meeting that he came forward and told us of earliest memories and experiences in aviation. He remembered seeing Norman Brearley fly over Mandurah in 1920 or 1921. In 1929 he went for a joyride in the Avro Avian that had competed in the 1929 Centenary Air Race when it visited Mandurah. Hal has also had a long association with aviation and gliding in WA. Thanks go to our two speakers and Hal for their participation in a great day of historical discussion.

## Red Bull Air Race

John Roulston has made good progress in the planning for the Red Bull Air Race to be held on Sunday November 19<sup>th</sup>. The booking of Bell's Restaurant at Barrack Square on the Swan River is confirmed. It can seat 200 people, but it is filling fast so contact John as soon as you can if you wish to get a great view of this unique event in very comfortable surroundings.

The Royal Aero Club is taking bookings with credit card payment, Ph. 9417 0025 (cashier). If you have any queries you can talk to John in person at the next (October) meeting, or on 9497 9337, at evenings or weekends, or preferable by email at [ezilift@iinet.net.au](mailto:ezilift@iinet.net.au)

## Poets Corner

Fred Robins read two of his poems at the last meeting. As usual they were appreciated by the audience and I am sure they will be looking to more in the near future. For those who weren't at the meeting – and for those who were – the poems are set out below.

### *Where will I go when I am gone?*

*By Fred Robins*

Where will I go when I am gone?  
Where will I be when I depart?  
Will I ascend above to travel on?  
Or will I plummet, like a falling dart?

I was born in Meekatharra,  
I've travelled to Broad "Arrer"  
And I've been along the road to Gundagai,  
I've travelled quite extensively  
Both cheaply and expensively  
And I'll keep on travellin' on until I die.

But what will I do upon demise?  
Will I stay immobile in the dark?  
Will I be in torment in the fires?  
Or will I sing in Heaven like a lark?

I've flown a plane past Bali  
As a wartime Air Force "Charlie",  
Piloting a big black P.B.Y.  
Mining harbours at a level  
That would scare the very devil  
Out of Air Force men who flew in days gone by.

I've come back to Australia  
With a starboard engine failure  
And I've done patrols across the land and seas  
Flying twenty hour flights  
On two successive nights  
Up to Surabaya and the Celebes.

But where will I go when I am gone?  
It's a question that I often think upon.  
Will I marvel at great sights  
As I did on Air Force flights?  
Or will I be restrained from travellin' on?

I've been to Oodnadatta,  
Marble Bar and Parramatta  
And I've seen the best of all the cities' sights.  
I've journeyed to the Snoweys,  
Smiggin Holes and Cabramatta  
And enjoyed the wondrous skies and starry nights.

But the time has come to ponder  
And reflect on what lies yonder  
When I get to the time for passing on.  
You see, I love to travel  
And it's a mystery to unravel.  
Where will I go when I am gone?

### *The Circular Rainbow.*

*By Fred Robins.*

Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet.  
That's what I saw, when I was an air force pilot.  
Flying out of Cunderdin, in 1942,  
In an air force Tiger Moth on a solo practice flight,  
And all I had to do was to practice rate 1 turns  
To the left and to the right.

At 4000 feet I was up above the clouds  
With a feeling so serene,  
Away from the "madding crowds".  
A fine misty rain was present down below,  
And, as I banked I could clearly see a circular rainbow.  
With the shadow of my plane midst this glorious array,  
In all my life I've never seen a more spectacular display!

Fred's readings got appropriate and long applause.

## Speakers for 2007

We are on the lookout for "mini-speakers" and "speakers of the day" for the year 2007. We encourage the *mini-speaker* to talk on a single issue or incident for about 10 minutes - 15 at the absolute maximum. The *speaker of the day* should aim at telling a story in under 35 minutes. Both types of speaker are encouraged to find a series of photographs, or other material, to support their stories so that they can be incorporated in a PowerPoint display.

We have already had a number of offers; but with our meetings covering eleven months of the year, we need twenty-two people to offer their services.

Remember, speakers do not have to come from our membership. If you know of someone who might have an interesting tale to tell, broach the subject with them and see if they are inclined to tell a story to us.

## Next meeting

The speakers will be Ian Metcher on general aviation and Dick Overheu on his RAAF experiences.

Come along to the Royal Aero Club at noon on the Friday October 27<sup>th</sup> to hear our speakers and have a convivial lunch with tea or coffee for the modest sum of \$12.00.

Hope to see you there.

Brian Hernan