



The Old Fliers Group

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

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JANUARY MEETING DEFERRED TO FEBRUARY 2

Please Note

Date Change of next meeting

At the last meeting of the group it was decided to hold the January meeting a week early, due to Australia Day falling on the last Friday in January. On checking with the catering staff it was discovered that the proposed change was not possible, due to previous bookings on the restaurant. Therefore the January meeting date had to be changed to Friday, February 2nd. (This change will have no effect on the normal February meeting scheduled for the last Friday of February 2007). **Mark both date in your diary now – February 2 and February 23.**

Pre Christmas Meeting

The last meeting of 2006 was a great success. Just over ninety members enjoyed a special Christmas luncheon with decorations and Christmas bon bons. The main course was followed by Christmas pudding with brandy custard and tea or coffee – all for the usual price.

Speaker of the Day

Ivan Peirce was the *Speaker of the Day*. He told us of his training on Tigers, Ansons and Lockheeds before being chosen for an astro navigation course at Nhill in Victoria. On completion of that he was transferred to *secret operations* with Qantas in Perth where he was endorsed on the PBY-5B Catalina.

Ivan crewed the first Catalina flight to cross the Indian Ocean to Lake Koggala in Ceylon, a non-stop flight of over 3000 miles that sometimes took 30 hours. In all, he made a total of 44 crossings in the fleet of five faithful Catalinas. Flying in secrecy and in radio silence to avoid discovery by the enemy, 271 Catalina crossings were made by Qantas.



Catalina No5, "Spica Star" at Nedlands in late 1944.

A typical departure was before sun-up from the base at Nedlands. Once airborne, they set heading toward the northwest – next stop Ceylon! After flying all day they would watch the sun go down in the west, only to see it re-appear in the east about ten hours later. For this reason the flights were called "Double Sunrise" flights. Arrival at Lake Koggala in Ceylon was during the morning of the second sunrise, usually before 10.00 am. After a couple of day's rest, the flight was made in the reverse direction.

Ivan gave a good coverage of the flight management and handling characteristics of the Catalina. Cruise speed was just over 100 knots at about 1000 -2000 feet on the westbound flights; slightly higher for the return journey to pick up the prevailing winds. Management of the two Pratt & Whitneys was a big part of the job. On one occasion, an inaccurate weather forecast resulted in a terrifying flight through a cyclone for over six hours.

Later, Liberators took over from the Catalinas and Ivan made a further 23 crossings in them. In 1945 the route was revised and the Liberator flights started in Sydney. Ivan crewed the first Liberator to make the Sydney - Ceylon flight. Later still, he flew an Avro Lancastrian on the same route. Even though many years have passed, Ivan still has a special feeling for the faithful "Cat".

All present were fascinated by his talk and the degree of member interest was displayed by the high number of questions that followed. Interestingly, among his audience were Doug Muir and Cliff Brown, both involved in the "Double Sunrise" flights, Doug as a pilot and Cliff as a ground (water???) engineer.

Another European Tour

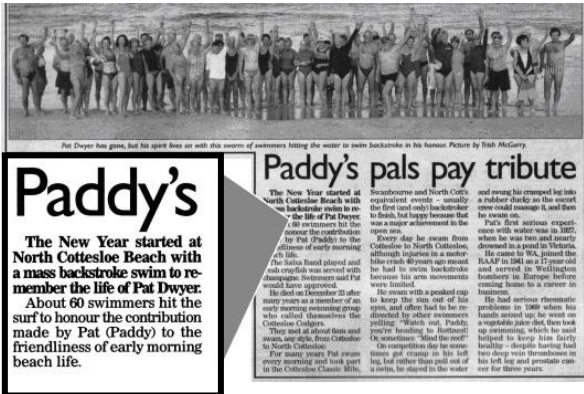
The plans a moving ahead nicely for a second European tour. Tony Munday has the organisation well in hand for a somewhat similar tour to the last, in that it will visit a number of aviation establishments and air shows, but it will be different enough for this year's participants to go again. There has been a good degree of interest shown so far.

Tony can be contacted in person at our meetings or by phone on 9386 3902 or by email at lunarian@cygnus.uwa.edu.au.

Have a talk to some folk who were on the last one. Without exception, they all had a wonderful holiday.

Goodbye

It is with regret that we report the passing of two of our members. In early December Ian Higham, well-known in the general aviation fraternity, passed away, and in late December Pat Dwyer, our main speaker in September, passed away too. They will both be sadly missed. Below is an extract from the "Post" the local newspaper in Pat's district where he was a keen early morning swimmer with the "Cottesloe Codgers".



Poet's Corner

Prior to the last meeting, Brian John asked Fred Robins to pen a special poem for our Christmas event. His contribution was well received, and for the record it is set out below.

**** MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE. ****

'Twas the day before Christmas that Brian lost the plot,
Flying down to Perth on the way to Jandakot.
He thought he was a "Red Bull" as he skimmed above the river
Travelling at a speed that would make a "Red Bull" shiver.

Then he dropped the plane down lower, - like really super low
And he heard a voice above him shouting "Ho, Ho, Ho, Ho, Ho."
So he turned the plane quite sharply through forty five degrees
Feeling sickness in his stomach and weakness in his knees
There, straight ahead, and right in his way
Was the man with white whiskers, driving his sleigh.

There was little space between them as Brian flew past Santa
With the throttle on to FULL, and Rudolph at a canter.
Good Luck was on his side, as there was no collision
As Brian kept on flying with his usual precision.

As he landed back at Jandakot and alighted from his plane,
He felt extremely happy to be on the ground again.
Pretending that the day had been a lot of fun
He called out to the Ground Staff - "HAPPY CHRISTMAS
EVERYONE"

Fred Robins.

Thanks to Fred for his poetic contributions throughout the year. They have been very much appreciated by the members.

Good News

Catalina Arrives at Bullcreek.

At last the Catalina that enthusiasts have been talking about for some years has arrived at the Bullcreek

Aviation Heritage Museum - and who should be thereto supervise the unloading of the precious cargo? - None other than Ivan Peirce. Ivan was our main speaker at the November meeting talking on the subject of - you guessed it, Catalinas.

The aircraft appears to be in excellent condition. It has, however, presented a few problems at the museum, space-wise. They are at the limit. In fact the replica of the Hans Bertram Junkers floatplane has been removed to make way.

It is understood that a special team of engineers will assemble the Catalina in the display area. The OFG will let you know when the assembly is complete so that you can take a good look.



Ivan Peirce with the Catalina on arrival at Bullcreek.

Call for Cash

Yes, it has come to that subject of money to keep the show on the road. Our expenses are minimal with the majority of cash going on stamps, envelopes, nametag holders and a small amount on photocopying. (The Royal Aero Club donates a percentage, as do other members). You may contribute by offering a sub of \$5.00 to our cashier at the next meeting, or subsequent meetings. If you wish to make a more substantial donation then please do so, otherwise a sub of \$5.00 should be enough to see us through most of this year.

We spend about \$25 a year on nametag holders. If you have any spares at home you might like donate them to the group at the next meeting.

Next meeting

As mentioned earlier, the January meeting will be held on Feb 2 due to Australia Day falling on our normal meeting day.

Come along to the Royal Aero Club at noon on that date to hear our speakers, Tony Abbott and Ian Howell, and have a nice lunch for the modest sum of \$12.00.

Hope to see you there.

Brian Hernan