



## The Old Fliers' Group

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

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#### Lotterywest Grant

About five months ago the Chief Financial Officer of the Royal Aero Club, David Currey, and your editor hatched a plan to apply to Lotterywest for a grant to purchase audio-visual equipment, namely a laptop computer, data projector, video camera and associated software. Happily, the grant for \$4000 was recently approved and we conducted our last meeting with the new equipment for the first time.

Up until that time we had used the Club's equipment, but on occasions there had been problems with overlapping staff requirements. Thanks to Lotterywest, those problems are behind us and we are free to conduct our meetings with the assurance that they will go ahead as planned.

Also, in the past we have had requests from outside groups, mainly involving seniors, to deliver talks on the development of aviation in WA. Now, with our own equipment it is possible to say a definite "yes", knowing that there will be no problems with equipment.

Our thanks go to Lotterywest for making this possible.



Members are also advised that **Retravision, Osborne Park** provided the successful quote for the equipment – we got excellent service and attention from the staff.

#### Parking

From all reports the parking plan is working well. It is only with feedback from members that we can improve the service. If you have any suggestions, bring them up at the next meeting.

#### Last Meeting

##### Poetry

John "Bomber" Bailey has a great bank of aviation oriented poetry that is well-suited to our group. Last month delivery was no exception. It was a tale of a WWII gunner shooting at the enemy - and even at shadows!

#### Mini Speaker

The September Mini Speaker was David Bennett who began by explaining how a Lancaster crew spent their time in preparation for a sortie over enemy territory. He told of the

meticulous preparation and testing of the aircraft, the systems and the guns, both before the mission and before reaching the target.

David gave a graphic description of one particular night-flight to Berlin. As they approached the target area, which was illuminated by so many incandescent flares, "you could read a newspaper," they were confronted with a sky full of flack, searchlights and the dreaded enemy night-fighters.

David said the worst part was that, after dropping their bombs, instead of immediately turning for home, they were required to continue on the same heading for a considerable time so that vertical photographs could be taken to assess the effectiveness of their bombs. He said, and we believed him, "they were the longest seconds of my life".

#### Speaker of the Day

Hilly Rostowsky had the undivided attention of members for the entire length of his talk. He related that, after being rejected by the South African Air Force, he literally talked his way into the RAF and the Fleet Air Arm. After basic training it was time for his first carrier landing, which he described with precision. "From circuit height the carrier looked like a matchbox," he said. Circuit speed 180 knots. Speed back to 150 knots on final. Engine 9500 rpm. Hook down. Approach angle guided by two amber lights – kept exactly in the centre of a row of greens. Trim. Fly it on.

If everything went perfectly the hook grabbed the centre wire of six strung across the deck. Bang! Decelerate to stop in 1.5 seconds, G-force 3.8. Clear the flight deck as quickly as possible so that others can land.

Phew. I was tense, and I was just sitting in the audience.

Hilly went on to discuss some other interesting aspects of his life in the Fleet Air Arm. If you think it is just taking off and landing on a postage stamp, you are wrong. Hilly got involved in some amazing and dangerous situations that had little to do with jet fighters. Thank you Hilly for keeping us spellbound for thirty-five minutes. I am sure that all who attended were thoroughly impressed.

#### Next Meeting

At the October meeting, Sturdee Jordan will relate how he handled a pair of hijackers on a flight over the Middle East, and Bob Russell will tell us about his "special" airport.

I hope to see you at the Royal Aero Club at noon on Friday October 26<sup>th</sup> for a relaxing lunch and talks.

Brian Hernan