



The Old Fliers' Group

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

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Bulletin Sheet No 41, November 2007

Last meeting for 2007

The November meeting, to be held on November 30th, it will be the last for this year. Plainly, the last Friday in December is too close to the Christmas and the New Year festivities for us to hold a meeting.

Lotterywest

Thanks to Lotterywest, our new equipment is working well. Earlier this month we were able to attend a senior's gathering arranged by the Shire of Mundaring to deliver an audio-visual presentation on the "The Development of Aviation in Western Australia".

Parking

The parking and pick-up plan is working well – with one exception. On the morning of our last meeting a couple of distressed ladies arrived at the Club restaurant to announce to the staff that some "nutter" in the carpark attempted to "pick them up". They were, of course, not members of the Old Fliers Group and were unaware of the service we provide.

Last Meeting

The Mini Speaker at the October meeting was Bob Russell who told us of his days at Maylands in the early 1950s when he learned to fly on Tiger Moths and Chipmunks. Later, when he moved to Esperance to farm he found it convenient to fly to Perth on business and that led to him establishing the charter company, ESAIR Pty. Ltd.

Bob's farm was much closer to town than the regional airport and there was a corner of his property that was unsuited to cropping so he decided to develop an "air park" on the site. The dream that took thirty years to come true. After numerous battles with "tree huggers", the bureaucracy, and the shire, the *Myrup Fly-in Estate* (MFE) was opened last year. It has two runways and taxiways that lead to accommodation and hangers. One of the hangers is home to the local aero club.

It was great to hear how Bob's dream came true, but not without a great deal of hard work and help from neighbours, local businesses and fellow farmers. If you are flying down Esperance way you will find MFE about five miles north east of the town. It has great facilities and you're welcome.

Speaker of the Day

It is not very often that you can hear, first hand, of the drama involved in a hijacking. Sturdee Jordan told how he handled a pair of raving Arabs who force their way into the cockpit of his aircraft soon after departing Dubai in the United Arab Emirates. One held a gun to his head and the other held a knife at the head of his co-pilot. They demanded to be flown to Baghdad.

The hijacker's tempers flared when Sturdee announced that he had insufficient fuel for the leg and that he would have to make an intermediate landing. More trouble developed and menacing threats were made when airports along the route stated that fuel was not available, and Baghdad announced that obstructions had been placed on runways and taxiways and he must land elsewhere. Obviously, none of the airports in the region wanted to be seen as a haven for hijackers.

It was only by maintaining a cool head and exercising a great deal of diplomacy that the aircraft stayed in the air, let alone refuel and land safely at Baghdad.

Happily, all survived to tell the tale.

Poetry

It is always a delight to hear John "Bomber" Bailey's poems. The one below that he gave us at the last meeting appealed to my sense of humour – how about yours?

Oh! Little I knew that summer night,
as I sat by the smooth ocean there,
where the orange moon made the waters bright,
as smooth as a lady's hair.

Oh! Little I knew as I watched the ships
slip silently out to sea,
that someone else was kissing the lips
that used to belong to me.

Oh! Little I knew that summer night
as the silent stars swung low,
that you had gone to a place where you and I
as sweethearts used to go.

Or that he was learning of your charms
and you a new delight
held close in another's arms
without fear or fight.

Oh! Little I knew how your evening fared
or that I'd been put on the shelf.
Little I knew and little I cared -
For I was doing alright myself.

Next Meeting

At the November meeting, Frank Cocks will tell us some interesting tales of the Jeep in WWII and Ted Fletcher will talk on structural failures in De Havilland aircraft.

I hope to see you at the Royal Aero Club at noon on Friday November 30th for a relaxing lunch and interesting talks.

Brian Hernan