



The Old Fliers' Group

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

Coordinator: Brian John, Ph 9883 8001

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February Meeting

The February meeting was held on another hot day with the temperature over 40°C, but the air conditioner was up to the challenge and members had another enjoyable day.

The Mini Speaker was Bill Charnley who, after having his Beechcraft D17 Staggerwing refurbished in New Zealand, is stopping over in Perth as he flies back to his home in Reno, Nevada, USA.

Bill had been staying with Kevin Bailey (son of "Blue Bailey") on his airport property south of Perth. Three days before the meeting Bill knew nothing of the OFG, but after a phone call and a few emails Bill found himself on his feet in front of a hundred members at the February meeting.



The 450 hp Pratt & Whitney radial engine.

Bill told us that his Staggerwing is a 1932 design, a 1944 build, and a 2009 restoration – it is in absolutely mint condition. Every nut and bolt, every panel and every pane reflects perfection. It seems a shame to expose such a showpiece to the elements. On the day of the meeting, both Bill's Staggerwing and Kevin's Stinson Reliant were on display on the tarmac outside the Club for members to view – both truly magnificent aircraft.

Bill has amassed 33,000 hours while flying with the Air National Guard, the US Air Force and United Airlines, as well as his recreational flying. After purchasing the Staggerwing he sent it to New Zealand for restoration and now the job is complete he is flying it home to Reno, via Australia, South East Asia, India, Middle-East, Europe, across the North Atlantic to Canada and finally home. In easy stages, it may take him about four years.

Speaker of the Day

The Speaker of the Day was Joe Ward who made a second appearance to complete his story on Canberra

aircraft and a bird strike, before taking us into the world of helicopters.



The seventeen passenger Sikorsky S62.

Joe, who has over 10,000 rotary hours, flew the early types, like the Bristol Sycamore, Bell and Sikorsky in the RAF. When he came to Australia he flew for Ansett in the Eastern States and then with Bristow in all parts of Western Australia. The largest type he flew was the 17 passenger Sikorsky, used to fly crews and equipment to the oil rigs and platforms. One contract had him fly to 26 lighthouses on the WA coastline that were inaccessible by road or sea.

His vivid descriptions of landing on pitching ships and windy platforms were most descriptive. The audience was left in no doubt that he had been involved in a demanding and unforgiving aspect of aviation.

Vote of Thanks

Frank Pownall moved a vote of thanks to both of our speakers for entertaining and enlightening us with their stories.

If you haven't managed to pay your annual sub you can pay at the next meeting or mail a cheque to: Brian Hernan, 1 / 4 Kings Park Ave., Crawley, 6009. If you pay by cheque, it must be made out to the "Royal Aero Club".

March Meeting

At the March meeting, both the *Speaker of the Day* and the *Mini Speaker* will talk on historic military flights that originated from Perth in 1942 and 1946 respectively.

So I hope you can make it the Royal Aero Club this Friday, 26th March at noon.

Brian Hernan