



## The Old Fliers' Group

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

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#### May Meeting

Based on the sale of lunches there were 105 members present at the May meeting. This was surprising, as we expected the numbers to be down a little due to a variety of reasons which we knew about beforehand.

Some members attended the funeral of George Gilbert, which was carried out at the same time as our meeting. George was a well-known and respected identity in the aviation industry. He was the *Speaker of the Day* at our May meeting in 2009. Vale George.



*George's WWII Spitfire restored and flying in the UK.*

Our meeting got under way with apologies from non-attenders, then followed the introduction and welcome to visitors and new members. Your editor followed with "Lantern Slide Show", starting with a pair of aircraft in formation – the oldest Boeing still flying, a 1928 model C40, and the latest B787 *Dreamliner*, which is due to go into service very soon. That was followed by a video of an A380 brake test and photos of the Qantas Airbus A380 that recently suffered a brake failure at Sydney.

After a few brief video clips on general issues there was a presentation of photos taken by John Lennard (Len) Scott in the years 1936 to 1939 while he was an instructor at the Royal Aero Club of WA. During his time with the club Len took a number of shots of club aircraft and members. The collection recently came to light and we were lucky to obtain a copy. Photos of the pre-war era are relatively rare and it was pleasing get them, even though some of the names in the captions appeared to be in error.

Originally from South Australia, Len joined the RAAF in 1940 and by 1943 was promoted to

Squadron Leader flying Hudsons. On March 16<sup>th</sup> 1944 with a crew of four he departed Hughes Airfield, a base about 30 miles south of Darwin, on an operational mission which took them over the Arafura Sea. The Hudson was shot down, but Len and his crew survived. Sadly, they were all executed by the Japanese.

For the record, the crew consisted of: Squadron Leader John Leonard Scott; Flight Sergeant Robert King, Flight Sergeant Bruce Wallace, Flight Sergeant Keith Wright, Pilot Officer Don Beddoe.

#### Speaker of the Day

Next, we were thoroughly entertained and informed by John Wager, who spoke on the life and achievements of Charles Benjamin Redrup (1878 – 1961). Redrup was a designer, inventor and engineer who produced a number of revolutionary engines and devices, many of which were incorporated in aircraft, motor-cycles and other road vehicles.

He spent a great deal of his life building and developing the "axial engine". These amazing engines, with pistons parallel to the drive shaft, transferred their power to the shaft via a device called a "wobble plate" or a "swash plate".

During WWII, among other things, Redrup designed equipment for Lancasters, including: (a) a hydraulic pump and motor for the cannon drive. (b) a winch for loading bombs into the aircraft, and (c) a hydraulic drive for the gun-turrets, plus (d) the mechanism to spin the "bouncing bombs" designed by Barnes Wallace.

From the comments and discussion after the meeting it was apparent that all appreciated John's delivery.

#### June Meeting

The *Speaker of the Day* at the next meeting will be Brian Pope who will tell us about the development of the international air mail system – he has some amazing images. Following, will be Ian Howell who will talk about the early air mail system in Western Australia.

So try to make it the Royal Aero Club on Friday, 25th June at noon for lunch and to hear our interesting speaker. Hope to see you there.

Brian Hernan