



## The Old Fliers' Group

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

Coordinator: Brian John

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#### February Meeting

We got through the February meeting without a hitch. All equipment worked correctly and the power stayed on for the entire show.

#### Speaker of the Day

John Wager delivered Part 2 of the Sir Stanley Hooker story. As well as covering Hooker's engineering and management skills, toward the end of his talk, John displayed at list of most of the engines that Hooker had worked on – set out below is a list of aircraft in which they were installed.

ENGINE	AIRCRAFT
MERLIN	Hurricane, Spitfire, Lancaster, Mosquito
WELLAND	Meteor
DERWENT	Meteor
CLYDE	Westland Wyvern
NENE	Sea Hawk, Attacker, Vampire
TRENT	B777 and A380
AVON	Canberra, Valiant, Hunter, Scimitar
PROTEUS	Brabazon, Princess, Britannia
ORION	Vulcan, Canberra
OLYMPUS	Vulcan, TSR-2, Concorde
ORPHEUS	Folland Gnat
PEGASUS	Harrier

He must have been a superb engineer.

Thanks to John for his excellent and well-prepared presentation.

#### Dick Sasse

After previously telling us of some of his WW II exploits, Dick Sasse returned to tell us about his gliding experiences in the wheatbelt of Western Australia. Dick quoted examples of how he had coaxed the maximum out of a gliders by recognising and chasing thermals – and exploiting them to the maximum.

There is no doubt that Dick is the oldest glider pilot in Western Australia – but he is also among the most competitive. Thank you Dick for transporting us on silent wings into the field of gliding.

#### Kalgoorlie Propeller

Thanks to the efforts of Ken Wiggins and his cabinetmaker son-in-law, the propeller from the "Kalgoorlie Biplane" is now in a showcase and on display at the club. The project has been financed by the OFG member contribution, supplemented in part by a grant from the Civil Aviation Historical Society. The propeller is without doubt one of the

most historic items in the history of Western Australian aviation.

The propeller is from the first WA-built aeroplane that was flown from Bowe's Paddock a few kilometres to the north-west of Coolgardie in mid-1915 by Edward Geere. The propeller was constructed from seven laminated sections of Italian walnut fashioned by Roy Burton, a member of the syndicate that built the machine.

The engine that powered the historic aeroplane came from one of the first two Bristol Boxkites imported into Australia in late 1910. One of those Boxkites was flown by J J Hammond at Belmont in January 1911 – it was the first flight of a heavier-than-air machine in Western Australia. Later in 1911, both Boxkites were flown in Sydney where one was sold to a dentist by the name of William Ewart Hart. Hart was issued with Australian Pilot Licence No 1 in December 1911 by the Aerial League of Australia. He crashed the Boxkite so many times that it was written off and the badly damaged engine was sold to the Kalgoorlie syndicate. They went to great lengths to repair it and improve its reliability, but it proved to be the weak link in their venture.

The Kalgoorlie Biplane made its last flight in Perth in 1916. The passenger on that last flight was Mr. M. De Pedro who had the honour and distinction of being Perth's first aerial passenger. After that flight the aircraft was put into storage at Union Maltings in North Perth where the propeller was removed and given by Geere to De Pedro as a memento of his flight. In 1938, De Pedro donated the propeller to the Royal Aero Club. Since then it has been looking for a good home, and thanks, largely to the OFG members, it has now found one. The club committee will decide on the permanent site of the display.

#### March Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Friday 25 March. Postponed from the last meeting, Reg Adkins will be the *Speaker of the Day*. He will talk on the Air Beef scheme in Western Australia where MMA DC3s were used to airlift beef from Glenroy Station in the Kimberley to Wyndham meatworks for processing and shipment.

Your editor will talk on how, in February 1942, thirty-two aircraft were towed from Maylands, through Perth, to Fremantle to be transported to Java on the ill-fated USS *Langley*.

Hope to see you there.

Brian Hernan