



The Old Fliers' Group

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

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Mini Speakers

No. 1. The July meeting got under way with two mini speakers. Following on from his previous two talks on the aviation interests of Nevil Shute, John Wager delivered an interesting snippet of news relating the yachting scenes in the classic Nevil Shute movie *On the Beach*. After the last meeting, John contacted a friend in Victoria who happened to be commodore of the yacht club where the sailing scenes for the movie were shot.



John's ex-commodore friend sent him a film clip of Ava Gardner and Gregory Peck being tipped into the ocean during the making of the film.

With a lifetime of yachting experience, John explained the sequence that led to Ava and Gregory ending up in the water.

No. 2. Our second mini speaker was Bob Ashley who told us about of his time in the RAF while serving in Lubeck, Northern Germany, during the Berlin airlift in 1948-49.



The Lubeck base was situated near the northern corridor that provided air access to and from the West that carried thousands of tons of food and equipment to West Berlin after the Soviets imposed the blockade.

Bob explained how large numbers of aircraft were serviced in the open, at all times of day and night to keep the show on the road.

Speaker of the Day

Howard Wheatley continued with the story of his involvement in aviation. After nine months of operations on Beauforts in New Guinea he was sent south where he received news that Airlines (WA) in Perth was short of a pilot. Howard was offered the position, which he accepted, and in a matter of weeks was working as an airline pilot. Apart from flying, he soon found himself using his accountancy skills to bring company records up to date.

As time passed, the company routes covered Wiluna, Kalgoorlie, Esperance and Rottneest. Aircraft in the fleet included a Monospar, a DH Dragonfly, DH Rapides, and in post-war years Avro Ansons and DH Doves.

After WWII Howard formed the company Saw Wheatley & Co., Chartered Accountants, and as the business expanded he found it convenient to service country clients by air. His next move was to purchase his own aircraft and to set up a helicopter company. He flew single and twin fixed wing aircraft and helicopters, with a first class instrument rating, which allowed him great flexibility in his business dealings.

Frequent business trips to Sydney in his high performance Moonie resulted in a speed record and subsequently a round-Australia record in the same aircraft. Later he established speed records in his helicopters, eventually accumulated thirteen Australian and fourteen International records, all ratified by FAI.

Next Meeting

At the next meeting we will have some silk WWII maps on display. The *Mini Speaker* for the August meeting will be Bob Ashley who will tell us more about his time in Germany while involved in the Berlin airlift. He will be followed by our *Speaker of the Day*, Wayne Parsons who will talk about RAAF helicopter operations in Vietnam.

A parking fee exemption has been arranged for 10.30 to 2.30 on Friday 30 August. So hope you can make the Royal Aero Club for lunch just before noon.

Brian Hernan