



The Old Fliers' Group

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

Coordinator: Stephen Rogers – Email: henol@bigpond.net.au

Bulletin No 109, February 2014

NEXT MEETING

Friday February 28th

Last Meeting

We got off to a flying start (pardon the pun) at our first meeting for 2014 with about 100 members in attendance.

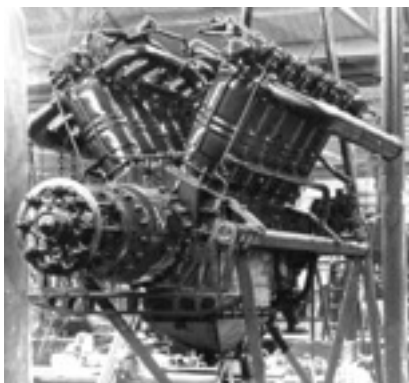
Speaker of the Day

The *Speaker of the Day* was John Hall who spoke about Rolls Royce – up to and including the development of the Rolls Royce “R” engine that was specifically developed for the Schneider Trophy Races in the 1930s.

John started with a brief background of Henry Royce, his background in engineering and his move into the car industry in 1903. One of his first three cars was sold to Henry Edmunds who showed it to Charles Rolls. It led to the establishment of the now famous Rolls-Royce Company in 1906.

John gave an interesting background of Charles Rolls, his interest in ballooning, 170 ascents, and his purchase of a Wright flying machine in 1908. Rolls made the first double crossing of the English Channel in June, 1910, but a structural failure led to his untimely death at Bournemouth in July of the same year.

The Rolls-Royce Company prospered with input from now-famous Claude Johnston. In 1914 Royce was asked to manufacture fifty Renault aero engines. This led him to develop the first Rolls-Royce aero engine – the *Eagle*; It proved to be a most reliable engine.



The Rolls Royce “Eagle” engine.

Also, during WWI, Walter Owen Bentley moved into the field of aero engine production with the Bentley RB2 rotary aero engine which was used in the Sopwith Camel. The design and development of aero engines brought Royce and Bentley together on many occasions.

The Schneider Trophy races started in 1913 and by mid-1920s there was fierce competition between the Britain, Italy, France and America. The British were represented by Supermarine and Rolls Royce – Reginald Mitchell designing the S-series floatplane and Rolls-Royce the “R” engine. If any country won the trophy in three consecutive years it became theirs in perpetuity.

In 1931 the British government withdrew its support so Lady Houston made a £10,000 contribution that saved the day. Britain won the cup for the third time and took the trophy home.

Over the 18 years of its existence, the Schneider Trophy race did much to influence progress in aviation, most dramatically in the increase in speed — from 45.71 mph in 1913 to 340.08 mph in 1931. A.F. Sidgreaves, managing director of Rolls-Royce, declared that it had compressed 10 years of engine development into two years.

It is said that Lady Houston’s contribution allowed Mitchell to blend the 6B ideas into his Spitfire and the Rolls-Royce R engine led directly to the design of the Merlin engine.

Kitty Hawk – 110 Years On

On December 17th last year the world celebrated the 110th anniversary of the Wright Brother’s momentous flight at Kitty Hawk. Your editor pointed out to members that the brothers did not just build an aeroplane and take it to Kitty Hawk where they flew it – it was the result of four years of serious research and four trips to Kitty Hawk before they succeeded.

Annual Subscription

Members can pay the annual subscription of \$10.00 for the year 2014 at the next meeting, or any future meeting should you wish. Alternatively, you can mail a cheque to Brian Hernan, 1 / 4 Kings Park Ave, Crawley, 6009. Cheques must be made out to “Royal Aero Club”.

Next Meeting

The January on January 31 will feature John Hall as *Speaker of the Day* with a talk on Rolls Royce – from the beginning and up to and including the Schneider Trophy races.

A parking fee exemption has been arranged for the meeting time slot 10.30 to 2.30 Friday, so hope to see you at the Royal Aero Club for lunch just before noon.

Brian Hernan