



The Old Fliers' Group

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

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NEXT MEETING

Friday January 31st

Last Meeting

We finished the year 2013 with an official count of 89 members in attendance to hear our speakers.

Mini Speaker

Bob Ashley related two humorous short stories from the post-WWII days when he was in the RAF.

When the Berlin Airlift ended in mid-1949, Bob was stationed at Wunsdorf and assigned to the maintenance centre. His flight sergeant (Chiefy) issued an order that all extraneous equipment had to be disposed of, so Bob was detailed to get rid of, among other things, a Hastings wheel assembly. (worth about £800 in 1949 money!)

After towing it to the Stores Department, it was rejected; the reason – *no paperwork*. Back to Chiefy for a new plan. The next move was to take it to the aerodrome tip. At the tip gate he received another rejection for the same reason – *no paperwork*. So it was back to Chiefy with the bad news.

It was then that a third plan was hatched. Chiefy directed Bob to a location that was obscured from general view where he was asked to dig a hole and bury the offending undercarriage – out of sight, out of mind. Bob said, “It is probably still there, *without any paperwork!*”

The second story was about his time in Malaya in 1954 where a “Dak” (DC-3) was fitted with a tape recorder to broadcast from a bank of speakers on the under-belly of the aircraft. The idea was to fly over the jungle warzone, reduce power to idle and play a tape that told the terrorists of the conditions of surrender.

Some bright-sparks had a brilliant idea at Christmas to replace the “surrender tape” with one of Bing Crosby singing “White Christmas”. It was an eerie sound that came from the heavens that confused the terrorists, but proved to be a morale booster for the allied troops.

Speaker of the Day

John Wager made another valued contribution with the story of Sir Lawrence Wackett who is widely regarded as “the father of Australian aircraft industry”. Members were reminded of the part that Wackett played in virtually all aspects of Australian aviation, as: pilot, designer of airframes and engines, entrepreneur and manager.

After joining the Army, Wackett graduated from Duntroon in 1915. In the same year he joined the Australian Flying Corps and flew both in the Middle East and France. He was awarded a DFC for his actions. After WWI, with the rank of

Squadron Leader, he established the RAAF Experimental Aircraft Section where he was responsible for the development of a number of aircraft.

When the Commonwealth Aircraft Corporation was established, he became General Manager and responsible for many designs and prototypes. Later he negotiated with the North American Corporation and Rolls Royce for the manufacture of the Australian Sabre with the Rolls Royce Avon engine. Later still, he was responsible for the RAAF adopting the Mirage.

John included the story of how, as a junior engineer under Wackett, he (unofficially) witnessed the official demonstration of the Avon engine to the Australian top brass (by hiding in the ceiling of the test facility).

As usual, special thanks to both of our speakers.

Annual Subscription

Once again it's time to raise the subject of money. You 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”.

Last Year's Top Excuses

My last twenty cheques bounced.

I was counting on you to forget.

I ran out of postage stamps.

The Merc takes all my spare cash.

I had a serious amnesia attack.

Meeting Dates

Meeting dates for the first five months of 2014 are listed below. Mark them in your diary now.

January	Friday January 31
February	Friday February 28
March	Friday March 28
April	Move to Friday May 2
May	Friday May 30

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 racing.

A parking fee exemption has been arranged for the meeting time slot 10.30 to 2.30 on Friday 29 November. So hope to see you at the Royal Aero Club for lunch just before noon.

Brian Hernan