



The Old Fliers' Group

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

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****NEXT MEETING**** Friday June 24th

The An225 in Perth

At our last meeting Steve Rogers told members of his excursion to Perth International Airport to see the Antonov An225 when it delivered a 117 ton generator for the South32 Alumina refinery near Collie. Not many people were able to see it land as the approach was from the north – and most viewers had gathered at the public viewing area situated to the south of the aerodrome. Road traffic was brought to a standstill for hours before and after the event. The viewing public was similarly thwarted at the departure of the aircraft a few days later.



The Antonov An225.

Steve also mentioned that he attended, with a good number of our members, the showing of the film "Return of the Catalina" which was recently screened in Perth. It told the story of Captain Rex Senior and the "Double Sunrise" flights between Crawley and Ceylon during WWII. There was also coverage of the recovery of Catalina VH-EAX for the Qantas Founder's Museum in Longreach.



Lancaster-Miller Saga

Your editor told the story of the "Lancaster-Miller Saga" which dominated the news in the late 1920s and the 1930s. Lancaster was born in England and emigrated to Australia prior to WWI. In 1916, he joined the Australian Army and later the Australian Flying Corps. After WWI he remained in Britain and joined the Royal Air Force. In 1927 he transferred to the RAF Reserve

and decided to make a name for himself by flying from England to Australia in the 'new' Avro Avian.

At a social event he met Jessie "Chubbie" Miller, who was also keen to make the flight; also, she was prepared to help with the finance the flight. Chubbie Miller (nee Beveridge) was born in Southern Cross, Western Australia in 1901 and spent her early childhood years in WA. The planned flight was, at that time, one of the longest to be made in such a small aircraft, and Chubbie would be the first woman to travel by air from England to Australia.



Chubbie with Lancaster, as he says goodbye to his wife.

After many incidents and accidents they arrived in Darwin – 159 days later. They became instant celebrities.

Six months later they travelled to USA where Chubbie learned to fly and she became a successful "powder puff" pilot and the holder of a number of national records.

Later she engaged a writer to record her experiences in life. A love triangle developed and after an argument the writer was shot and died. Bill was charged with murder and after a long and bitter trial he was acquitted.

Bill and Chubbie then moved to England where he attempted to salvage his reputation by making an attempt on the London to Cape Town record. He failed and perished in the Algerian desert. His mummified remains and wrecked aircraft were discovered by a French desert patrol – 29 years later!

Chubbie remained in London, married and died as Mrs Jessie 'Chubbie' Pugh in 1972.

Next Meeting

The next OFG meeting will be at the Royal Aero Club, at noon on Friday June 24th. The main speaker will be Gordon Hamilton who will tell us of his time as a 'travelling engineer', and Ian Miller will tell us about the opening of the Carnarvon Space Museum.

Brian Hernan.